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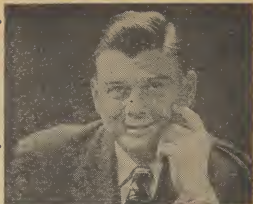
by Arthur Godfrey

The Navy almost scuttled me. I shudder to think of it. My crazy career could have ended right there. Who knows, I might still be bumming Chesterfields instead of selling them.

To be scuttled by the Navy you've either got to do something wrong or neglect to do something right. They've got you both ways. For my part, I neglected to finish high school.

Ordinarily, a man can get along without a high school diploma. Plenty of men have. But not in the Navy. At least not in the U. S. Navy Materiel School at Bellevue, D. C., back in 1929. In those days a bluejacket had to have a mind like Einstein's. And I didn't.

"Godfrey," said the lieutenant a few days after I'd checked in, "either you learn mathematics and learn it fast or out you go. I'll give you six weeks." This, I figured, was it. For a guy who had to take off his shoes to count



above ten, it was an impossible assignment.

I was ready to turn in my bell-bottoms. But an ad in a magazine stopped me. Here, it said, is your chance to get special training in almost any subject—mathematics included. I hopped on it. Within a week I was enrolled with the International Correspondence Schools studying algebra, geometry and trig for all I was worth.

Came week-end liberty, I studied. Came a holiday, I studied. Came the end of the six weeks, I was top man in the class. Within six weeks I had mastered two years of high school math, thanks to the training I'd gotten.

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FUTURE

SCIENCE FICTION

Volume 4
Number 4
November
1953

Robert W. Lowndes

Editor

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Cover by Alex Schomberg, illustrating "Ultimatum"

Interior Illustrations by Beecham, Luros, Murphy, and Orban

Next Issue on Sale November 1st

FUTURE SCIENCE FICTION, November, 1953, published bi-monthly by COLUMBIA PUBLICATIONS, INC., 1 Appleton Street, Holyoke, Mass. Editorial and executive offices at 241 Church Street, New York 10, New York. Entered as second class matter at the Post Office at Holyoke, Mass., under the act of March 3, 1879. Entire contents copyrighted 1953 by Columbia Publications, Inc. 25¢ per copy; yearly subscription \$1.50. When submitting manuscripts, enclose stamped, self-addressed envelope for their return, if found unavailable. The publishers will exercise care in the handling of unsolicited manuscripts, but assume no responsibility for their return. Printed in the U. S. A.

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Think of the opportunities in Television. Over 15,000,000 TV sets are now in use; 108 TV stations are operating and 1860 new TV stations have been authorized. Many of them expected to be in operation in 1953. This means more jobs—good pay jobs with bright futures. More operators, installation service technicians will be needed. Now is the time to get ready for a successful future in TV! Find out what Radio and TV offer you.

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Keep your job while training at home. Hundreds I've trained are successful RADIO-TELEVISION Technicians. Most had no previous experience; many no more than grammar school education. Learn Radio-Television principles from illustrated lessons. You also get PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE. Pictured at left, are just a few of the pieces of equipment you build with kits of parts I send. You experiment with, learn circuits common to Radio and Television.

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How to Be a
Success in
RADIO-TELEVISION



Down To Earth

A Department of Letters and Comment

IN THE book-review department, you'll find some interesting comments by Damon Knight on Ken Crossen's introduction to the anthology, "Future Tense", wherein Mr. C. takes exception to the oft-heard claim that science-fiction is—or should be—nothing more than entertainment. Such an attitude, Crossen argues, relieves the author of any responsibility for what he writes and insures mediocrity at best, and socially-dangerous outpourings at the worst. Knight agrees.

Considering that I've often defined science-fiction as "intelligent entertainment", among other things, it would seem as if Messrs Crossen & Knight and I are on opposite sides, here. But such isn't the case. Of

course, I can't expect very many readers to have read into "intelligent entertainment" everything that was in my own mind when I used the term; so I'll state right now that part of my qualification for "intelligent", in the phrase "intelligent entertainment" was a recognizable degree of auctorial responsibility. Now the phrase "recognizable degree" is vague, too, but intentionally so. After all, there's going to be a wide area of disagreement as to what will constitute that "recognizable degree", and any list of stories to which one might point will bring forth dissent from someone. But the important thing, I think, is to state a general principle.

Let's get down to cases, nonethe-

[Turn To Page 8]

Now! The Amazing Facts about

BALDNESS

...AND WHAT YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT



The following facts are brought to the attention of the public because of a widespread belief that nothing can be done about hair loss. This belief has no basis in medical fact. Worse, it has condemned many men and women to needless baldness by their neglect to treat certain accepted causes of hair loss.

There are six principal types of hair loss, or alopecia, as it is known in medical terms:

1. Alopecia from diseases of the scalp
2. Alopecia from other diseases or from an improper functioning of the body
3. Alopecia of the aged (senile baldness)
4. Alopecia areata (loss of hair in patches)
5. Alopecia of the young (premature baldness)
6. Alopecia at birth (congenital baldness)

Senile, premature and congenital alopecia cannot be helped by anything now known to modern science. Alopecia from improper functioning of the body requires the advice and treatment of your family physician.

BUT MANY MEDICAL AUTHORITIES NOW BELIEVE A SPECIFIC SCALP DISEASE IS THE MOST COMMON CAUSE OF HAIR LOSS.

This disease is called Seborrhea and can be broadly classified into two clinical forms with the following symptoms:

1. **DRY SEBORRHEA:** The hair is dry, lifeless, and without gloss. A dry flaky dandruff is usually present with accompanying itching. Hair loss is considerable and increases with the progress of this disease.
2. **OILY SEBORRHEA:** The hair and scalp are oily and greasy. The hair is slightly sticky to the touch and has a tendency to mat together. Dandruff takes the form of black scales. Scalp is usually itchy. Hair soon is severe with baldness as the end result.

Many doctors agree that to **NEGLECT** these symptoms of **DRY and OILY SEBORRHEA** is to **INVITE BALDNESS**.

Seborrhea is believed to be caused by three germ organisms—*staphylococcus albus*, *pytiosporum ovale*, and *acnes bacillus*.

These germs attack the sebaceous gland causing an abnormal working of this fat gland. The hair follicle, completely surrounded by the enlarged diseased sebaceous gland, then begins to atrophy. The hair produced becomes smaller and smaller until the hair follicle dies. Baldness is the inevitable result. (See illustration.)

But seborrhea can be controlled, particularly in its early stages. The three germ organisms believed to cause seborrhea, can and should be eliminated before they destroy your normal hair growth.

A post-war development, Comate Medicinal Formula kills these three germ organisms on contact. Proof of Comate's germ-killing properties has been demonstrated in laboratory tests recently conducted by one of the leading testing laboratories in America. (Complete report on file and copies are available on request.)

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You may safely follow the example of thousands who first were skeptical, then curious, and finally decided to avail themselves of Comate Medicinal Formula.



DESTRUCTION OF HAIR FOLLICLES

Caused By Seborrhea

A = Dead hairs; B = Hair-destroying bacteria; C = Hypertrophied sebaceous glands; D = Atrophic follicles.

A Few of the Many Grateful Expressions By Users of Comate Medicinal Formula

"My hair was coming out for years and I tried everything. Nothing stopped it until I tried Comate. Now my hair has stopped coming out. It looks so much thicker. My friends have noticed my hair and they all say it looks so much better."
—Mrs. R.E.J., Stevenson, Ala.

"Your hair formula got rid of my dandruff; my head does not itch any more. I think it is the best of all of the formulas I have used."
—E.E. Hamilton, Ohio.

"Your formula is everything you claim it to be and the skin to days told me of a very bad case of dry seborrhea."
—J.M., Long Beach, Calif.

"I do want to say that just within five days I have obtained a great improvement in my hair. I do want to thank you and the Comate Laboratories for producing such a wonderful and amazing formula."
—M.M., Johnston, Pa.

"I have found almost instant relief. My itching has stopped with one application."
—J.N., Stockton, Calif.

"My hair looks thicker, not falling out like it used to. Will not be without Comate in the house."
—R.W., Lonsdale, R. I.

"I haven't had any trouble with dandruff since I started using Comate."
—L.W.W., Galveston, Tex.

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—R.B.L., Philadelphia, Pa.

"The bottle of Comate I got from you has done my hair so much good. My hair has been coming out and breaking off for about 21 years. It has improved so much."
—Mrs. J.B., Lisbon, Ga.

Today these benefits are available to you just as they were to these sincere men and women when they first read about Comate. If your hair is thinning, over-dry or over-oily—if you are troubled with dandruff with increasing hair loss—you may well be guided by the laboratory tests and the experience of thousands of grateful men and women.

Remember, if your hair loss is due to Seborrhea, Comate CAN and MUST help you. If it is due to causes beyond the reach of Comate Medicinal Formula, you have nothing to lose because our **GUARANTY POLICY** assures the return of your money unless delighted. So why delay when that delay may cause irreparable damage to your hair and scalp. Just mail the coupon below.

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less. I think I can illustrate my point by taking a brief glance at the detective story field—which no one, to the best of my knowledge, denies as strictly an entertainment genre. My first exhibit will be some paragraphs from a couple of murder-mysteries by Agatha Christie, to my mind highly readable mysteries with ingenious solutions.

Mr. Cope rose. "In America," he said, "we're great believers in absolute freedom."

Dr. Gerard rose also. He was unimpressed by the remark. He had heard it made before by people of many different nationalities. Dr. Gerard knew that no race, no country and no individual could be described as free. But he also knew that there were different degrees of bondage.

★ ★ ★

Dr. Gerard said gravely, "I believe at least in one of the chief tenets of the Christian faith—*contentment with a lowly place*. I am a doctor and I know that ambition—the desire to succeed, to have power—leads to most ills of the human soul. If the desire is realized, it leads to arrogance, violence, and final satiety; and if it is denied—ah! if it is denied—let all the asylums for the insane rise up and give their testimony! They are filled with human beings who were unable to face being mediocre, ineffective, and who therefore created for themselves ways of escape from reality so to be shut off from life itself forever."

★ ★ ★

"It is no good turning one's face only to the fairer side of life. Below the decencies and conventions of everyday life, there lies a vast reservoir of strange things—as, for instance, delight in cruelty for its own sake. But when you have found that, there is something deeper still—the desire, profound and pitiful, to be appreciated. If that is thwarted, if through an unpleasing personality a human being is unable to get the response it needs, it turns to other methods—it must be *felt*—it must *count*—and so to innumerable strange perversions..."

— "Appointment With Death"

These observations on the part of Dr. Gerard fulfill the following functions in the story (a) they illuminate his

own personality; (b) they throw light on the character and motivations of another important person in the novel; (c) they have an important bearing on the solution of the mystery.

Now, let's look at one more excerpt:

"...Don't you think that there are people who ought to be murdered?"

"That, very possibly."

"Well, then!"

"You do not comprehend. It is not the victim who concerns me so much. It is the effect upon the character of the slayer."

"What about war?"

"In war you do not exercise the right of private judgement. *That* is what is so dangerous. Once a man is imbued with the idea that he knows who ought to be allowed to live and who ought not—then he is half way to becoming the most dangerous killer there is, the arrogant criminal who kills not for profit but for an idea."

— "Cards on the Table"

I must confess that this exchange between Hercule Poirot and another character in the novel is not functional to the plot; it does nothing more than state Poirot's personal outlook upon murder—but that is relevant to his actions.

Now the victim in "Appointment For Death" is a most undesirable person, a woman who is totally warped, and who has ruined the lives of her children, almost beyond recall. Miss Christie might have left it just at that, but she didn't. Dr. Gerard and another character in the story want to *understand*, and the second person realizes that, for all her sadistic tyranny, the victim was a pathetic creature. This is revealed without any sloppy sentiment, and without any excuses. To understand is not to excuse—but *understanding may prevent a repetition of the circumstances*.

BEAR IN mind that Miss Christie is not out to write popular philosophy, psychology, or ethical tracts; such paragraphs as I have quote are never thrown in for their own sake; they come at just the right time, plot-

[Turn To Page 81]

**Build a Fine Business... Full or Spare Time!
We Start You FREE—Don't Invest One Cent!**

MAKE BIG MONEY

WITH FAST-SELLING WARM

MASON LEATHER JACKETS

Rush Coupon for FREE Selling Outfit!

NOW IT'S EASY to make BIG MONEY in a profit-making, spare-time business! As our man in your community, you feature Mason's fast-selling Horsehide, Capeskin, Suede, other fine leather jackets — nationally known for smart styling, rugged wear, wonderful warmth. Start by selling to friends and fellow workers. Think of all the outdoor workers around your own home who will be delighted to buy these fine jackets from you, truck drivers, milkmen, cab drivers, gas station, construction men — hundreds in your own community! You'll be amazed how quickly business grows. And no wonder! — You offer these splendid jackets at low money-saving prices people can afford! Our top-notch men find it's easy to make up to \$10.00 a day EXTRA income!

SHOE AND LEATHER JACKET ARE BOTH
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These Special Features Help You Make Money From First Hour!

... Men really go for these warm Mason jackets of long-lasting Pony Horsehide leather, fine Capeskin leather, soft luxurious Suede leather. You can even take orders for Nylon, Gabardine, 100% Wool, Satin-faced Tull jackets, men's raincoats, too! And just look at these EXTRA features that make Mason jackets so easy to sell:

- Warm, cozy linings of real Sheepskin... nature's own protection against cold!
- Quilted and rayon linings!
- Laskin Lamb waterproof, non-matting fur collars!
- Knitted wristlets!
- Especially-treated leathers that do not scuff or peel!
- Zipper fronts!
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Non-scuff, warm Horsehide leather jacket lined with woolly Sheepskin — and new Horsehide work shoe also warmly lined with fleecy Sheepskin and made with oil-resisting soles and leather storm welt!

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Take orders for Nationally-advertised, Vibrotex Air-Cushion Shoes in 150 dress, sport, work styles for men and women. Air-Cushion Innersole gives wonderful feeling of "walking on air." As the Mason man in your town, you feature more shoes in a greater range of sizes and widths than the largest store in town! And at low, direct-from-factory prices! It's easy to fit customers in the style they want — they keep re-ordering, too — put dollars and dollars into your pocket! Join the exceptional men who make up to \$300 extra a month and get their family's shoes and garments at wholesale prices!

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Mail coupon today — I'll rush your powerful Free Jacket and Shoe Selling Outfit including 10-second Air-Cushion Demonstrator, and EVERYTHING you need to start building a steady, BIG MONEY, repeat-order business, as thousands of others have done with Mason!

SEND FOR FREE OUTFIT!

Mr. Ned Mason, Dept MA-163
MASON SHOE MFG. COMPANY,
Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin

You bet I want to start my own extra-income business! Please rush FREE and postpaid my Powerful Selling Outfit — featuring Mason Jackets, Air-Cushion Shoes, other fast-selling specialties — so I can start making BIG MONEY right away!

Name.....
Address.....
Age.....
Town..... State.....

MASON SHOE MFG. CO.
Dept. MA-163
Chippewa Falls, Wis.



Machine-guns opened up on the Nam robot, and mines set in the capitol steps exploded, as the mob burst through the barricades, ready to attack,



Grimsche was a dedicated man, incorruptible, unswerving, implacable. And what they forgot, when they decided that a human machine was needed for this job, was that you can't turn a Grimsche off, or re-set him for a different kind of job.

ULTIMATUM!

by Robert Sheckley

(illustrated by Paul Orban)



TO: ARA ILDEK
NAM IV
SOLONES CLUSTER
GALAXY X32-A

SUBJECT: CIVILIZING EXPEDITION TO SOL III

FROM: MORDESH KDAK
ORGANIZER
EXPEDITION 87C6

GREETINGS:
Expedition 87C6 has contacted the

planet locally designated as Sol III. We landed our ships near the various capitols of the various countries of this planet. As was expected, there was widespread panic and rioting.

During our descent, we were greeted with attacks of a chemical, molecular and atomic nature. This was expected and, of course, nullified without loss of life. We discovered at once, empirically, that Sol III has command of no energies past the atomic level; therefore we are in no apparent danger.

The people of Sol III are stage one barbarians, queer, outlandish creatures. They are humans, like ourselves, and have sufficient brain-capacity to learn civilized ways.

Psychologically, they are a mainstream deviant.

Their attacks upon us were apparently for the purpose of *taking lives*, instead of any of the recognized objectives of war. This situation is not unheard-of; nevertheless, it is shocking to behold at first hand.

Superficial investigation shows us that the Earthmen consider the *taking of life* as the final answer to all problems. This psychosis is deeply rooted in the history of the planet.

Our instruction units are trying to explain to them the true nature of what they call war, in a simplified fashion.

1. That war is essentially a symbolic affair.

2. That the objectives of war are, (a) capture of symbolic documents, (b) destruction of mechanicals, (c) superimposition of values, from the greater to the lesser.

To implement this, we are teaching them the principle of *Conformity*. So far, the Earthmen have shown no comprehension of this law of nature.

I am pleased to report that we have caused no direct loss of life. Any deaths have been the fault of the Earthmen, rioting among themselves.

This is being brought under control as rapidly as possible.

Already the Ultimatum has been delivered to all the capitols on this planet: —*That by twelve o'clock noon, local time, all documents of symbolic governing value must be surrendered to the Nam war mechanicals. All armies must be disbanded at once. All governments must, for the time, be turned over to Nam officials.*

Once this is accomplished, we will be able to go ahead with the subtler means of civilizing this savage race.

Just between us, Ara—not for the record—this planet depresses me. It has such a history of murder, rape, pillage. The oceans are blood, the rivers blood, the very soil is saturated with blood. I wish I were anywhere else. The Earthmen are plotting against us, I know. Even though they are harmless, their armies disbanded, the hatred in the air is almost palpable.

But the work of civilization must go on.

In Peace,
Mordesh Kdak, Organizer

FROM THE window they could hear the mob, gathered around the steps of the Capitol. A single deep murmur filled the air, as though the mob were growling with one voice. There were occasional bursts of gunfire.

"Is it twelve o'clock yet?" Kyoto asked.

Colonel Culver glanced at his handsome Swiss watch. "No. Fourteen minutes to."

"Ah," Kyoto said, as though the time were a very significant factor in his calculations. He turned away from the window and looked up at Culver. "Where is your man, Grimsche?"

"He'll be here any moment," Culver said. He walked to a table and began to leaf through a pamphlet the Nam invaders had distributed.

"He ought to be here now," Kyoto

said softly, a little embarrassed at having to say it. The colonel nodded. Kyoto began to feel very self-conscious. He didn't understand Americans, any more than he understood the Nam. How could the colonel be so calm, when a Nam robot was about to march into the Capitol and take the American Constitution? Kyoto began to wish he had stayed in Japan, with his own people. But quickly he reminded himself that the important thing was to stop the Nam, wherever they could be stopped. Only America had a weapon that surpassed atomic power; therefore America had to have the cooperation of everyone, against the common enemy. If his scientific knowledge could help, as the colonel had said it could...

The mob was growing noisier. Colonel Culver was still reading the pamphlet, swinging one foot against the leg of his chair. Kyoto began to pace up and down, running his fingers nervously through his hair. He hoped his wife had obeyed his telegram without delay, and gone to Honshu. Tokyo would be dangerous, with the Nam invading the Imperial Palace; she and the children would be safe in Honshu, with his father.

"Very interesting," Culver murmured.

"What?" Kyoto asked quickly.

"Their theory of Conformity." Culver's face was animated now. "Listen to this. *'When two forces meet, the lesser will transform itself to resemble the greater. Force, in this instance, refers to fundamental truth, or conformity to the real world, both physical and ideal.'* What do you make of that?"

"Metaphysics," Kyoto said. "What do we care for their rationalizations?"

"Stop pacing, man!" Culver cried humorously. "Of course we care. A knowledge of one's enemy is a fundamental rule of war. Consider this: A fundamental taboo of the Nam is the

taking of any human life whatsoever. What do you make of that?"

Kyoto shrugged his shoulders. Under different circumstances, he would have been very interested. But now the armies of the world were disbanded, their equipment smashed; now everything depended on one incomplete weapon, one man.

"This Grimsche, is he trustworthy?" Kyoto asked.

"Absolutely." Culver opened a drawer and began to take out tins of imported tobacco. Beside them he put a blackened clay pipe. "Grimsche served under me; I'd trust that big, gloomy man with my life."

"An army man?" Kyoto asked doubtfully.

"A master sergeant."

"I see," Kyoto said. He began to pace again. Somehow, he had thought that the war against the Nam would be carried on by the scientists, now that the military had proved ineffectual. He understood scientists. But to put so much responsibility on a sergeant...

Culver must have felt his thought. "Don't worry about Grimsche. He's unswervable, unswayable, incorruptible; he's a machine. Give Grimsche a job and he'll do it—though the world were dust around his feet, and the human race only a memory." He smiled apologetically for his rhetoric.

"Very poetic," Kyoto said. But still he didn't trust soldiers.

Colonel Culver stood up and looked regretfully at his uniform. "I'd better change," he said. "Presumably, there is no longer an army."

"I'll get the equipment for the Weapon," Kyoto said. He walked to the door, then stopped. "What time is it now?"

"Three minutes to twelve," Culver said, unknotting his khaki tie.

Outside, the noise of the mob was increasing ominously.

MASTER-SERGEANT Edwin Grimsche knew he shouldn't be standing in the mob. The colonel had wanted him at once. But he couldn't leave yet.

Grimsche hadn't had much contact with civilians in almost twelve years. The actions of a mob fascinated and repelled him. For the moment, fascination had won out.

A man shoved past Grimsche, hefting a three-foot length of lead pipe. "That robot'll never get into the Capitol," he said. "We'll tear it to pieces first."

Grimsche looked at the man curiously. Did he expect to attack a robot weighing perhaps a ton with that piece of pipe? These civilians had spirit—but it never lasted long. Mobs were the same the world over; their courage faded at the first serious setback.

He glanced at his watch. Two minutes to twelve. The Nam ultimatum had set twelve o'clock for handing over the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, now under guard in the Capitol. Otherwise, the Nam robot would take them. So far, the great golden robot on the steps of the Capitol was motionless.

Stolidly Grimsche held his ground as the mob shoved forward. They were gathered in a wide half-circle around the silent Nam robot, thousands of them. The last remaining units of the army had been trying to hold them back for three hours now, in order to bring the machine-guns and grenades into play. But the angry mob wanted to take vengeance into its own incapable hands.

Grimsche knew how they felt. He would have enjoyed ripping some of the invaders apart himself, but he wasn't moved by the mob's quick, easy passion. Emotions like that passed too easily, after the first flush of hatred. He was willing to wait his chance—forever, if necessary.

The mob surged restlessly; tenta-

cles of people beat against the barricades, and fell back. The mob shouted with a single voice, advanced and retreated with one body, clenched a single gigantic fist.

Twelve o'clock. The Nam robot lurched forward, up the steps of the Capitol. Army machine-guns began to chatter, the slugs ricocheting off the robot's gleaming hide and scattering into the crowd. Somewhere a man screamed in agony, but his voice was lost in the single voice of the mob.

Grimsche watched, frowning with disapproval as the mob burst through the barricades and ran after the robot. As they reached him, U. S. Army mines, set in the Capitol steps, went off. The explosions dug a great red hole in the mob. The hole closed quickly, and the robot moved on, undamaged.

Now the soldiers had to stop firing, for the mob was all around the robot. They flung themselves upon him, smashing at him with wrenches, tire irons, gun butts. One man had an acetylene torch; he clung to the robot's back, trying to melt down a shoulder.

Serenely the robot moved on, ignoring them, delicately avoiding their bodies.

Then the mob's collective mood changed. Anger gave way to awe, apprehension, fear.

"It's coming after me!" someone screamed, although the robot was moving directly toward the doors of the Capitol.

"It's coming!"

The mob turned and started to run. Grimsche had a few seconds head-start. He sprinted away with a heavy man's jarring stride, pushing people aside. He wasn't afraid of the robot; but the mob was likely to trample him to death if they overtook him. Over his shoulder he caught a last glimpse of the robot, entering the Capitol unhindered.

Civilians were just as stupid as ever,

Grimsche thought. He had wasted enough time sightseeing.

2



HE ADDRESS Colonel Culver had given him was a narrow brownstone building not far from the Capitol. Grimsche knocked, and heard Culver call, "Come on in." He entered, and found Culver in the

living room.

Colonel Culver was out of uniform, dressed in a plain gray business-suit. Still he was military. His suit was creased precisely, and the flower in his buttonhole looked like a decoration. In front of him, on a low table, were a dozen tins of imported tobacco and an old clay pipe. Culver was mixing tobacco in a brandy glass, and sniffing the result.

"At ease, sergeant, sit down," Culver said. "We're really not in the army any more."

Grimsche didn't answer. He knew they *were* still in the army, for uniforms didn't make the difference.

Culver added a few strands of black tobacco to his mixture, shook it gently, and began to fill his clay pipe. "How is it outside?"

"A mob tried to stop the Nam robot," Grimsche reported, sitting on the edge of a straight wooden chair. "They failed."

"Of course," Culver said. He lit his pipe with a complicated gadget and leaned back. "Quite as I expected. Atomic artillery didn't stop them. But mobs are prone to believe that their righteous anger is a solvent to dissolve any armor." He smiled an apologetic little smile.

Grimsche smiled too, forgiving the colonel his fancy language.

"Now down to cases," Culver said, blowing clouds of smoke across the room. "When the Nam first landed, the President and the Chiefs of Staff held a conference. They realized that any race capable of crossing space would have a tremendous technological advantage over us. Even our atomic weapons proved ineffectual, as it turned out. The President had to make some provision for the prosecution of the war, even with the disbanding of the government and the armed forces."

Culver lit his pipe again. "We *did* have a secret weapon. It had been in the project-stage for over five years, and still wasn't completed. But what a lovely weapon it was! It utilized an entirely new energy-principle, a cancellation of mass instead of a disruption of it. The President felt that, at all costs, this weapon and the scientists working on it had to be protected. You follow me?"

"Yes sir," Grimsche said, frowning with concentration.

"Therefore the entire project went underground. Since we had no idea what security-methods the Nam invaders might be capable of, the underground was kept as small and tight as possible. I was appointed head of that organization."

Grimsche nodded approvingly. The President couldn't have used any of the top brass to head the job; they'd be watched. A scientist was out of the question; they were too impractical. Culver was a hell of a good officer. Even with his love of junk like that imported tobacco, even with his fancy language, he was the best officer Grimsche had ever served under.

"Now for your part in this," Culver said. "Grimsche, I need a man I can count on for liason. The underground is necessarily broken into two parts. We're here, in Washington. But the scientists and the weapon are hidden—"

THE DOOR opened and a small black-haired man rushed in, carrying a suitcase. "I have most of it," he said, out of breath. "Couldn't locate any germanium, and half of the Formula X524 components are missing. But they can work around that."

Culver said, "Grimsche, I'd like you to meet Kyoto; he's our Washington scientific head, scavenger division."

Grimsche stood up slowly. "Japanese?"

Kyoto nodded, grinning uncertainly. Grimsche looked at him a moment, his heavy face impassive; then he turned and walked to the window. Kyoto's grin began to fade.

"What's wrong, Grimsche?" Culver asked.

Grimsche turned. "May I speak my mind, Colonel?"

"Go ahead."

"I never considered that war over," Grimsche said, his face expressionless.

"A treaty was signed," Culver said.

"A scrap of paper doesn't change anything. You really want me to speak my mind, Colonel?"

"Yes, yes," Culver said. "Let's have everything in the open."

"OK. I fought that war; I remember it. I remember the guys who were killed. Enemies don't become friends just because of a piece of paper."

Kyoto began to smile nervously again, involuntarily running his fingers through his hair.

"The way I see it," Grimsche said, "we shouldn't have stopped the war; we should have killed them all."

"You're no military theorist, I fear," Culver sighed. "Wars aren't fought between *men*, Grimsche. Wars are products of economic conditions, resurgent nationalism, a dozen other factors."

"I don't know anything about that, sir," Grimsche said. "I just think an enemy is an enemy. Always."

"Perhaps," Kyoto said, "if the sergeant feels that way, I should leave—"

"Nonsense!" Culver said sharply.

"Grimsche, you know what we're up against; we need any help we can find."

"I know that, sir," Grimsche said. "It's OK with me, his working on our side. I just wanted you to know how I felt."

"Your privilege," Culver said. "Best to get these things aired. Now back to the matter at hand. Sit, both of you."

Kyoto and Grimsche sat down, not looking at each other.

"We are here in Washington for two reasons," Culver said. "First, the weapon will be used here. Second, here we can find the necessary material. But the actual weapon, and the men producing it, are hidden in Virginia. You, Grimsche, will be our courier. This equipment must reach Virginia; the scientists there will know what to do with it."

Kyoto glanced out the window. "I would suggest haste," he said apologetically. "The Nam may close the city."

"I don't think so," Culver said. "You shouldn't have any trouble getting through this time, Grimsche. You'll stay in Virginia until the scientists need more components. Then come back; we should have the rest of it by then."

"Yes sir," Grimsche said.

Culver found a slip of paper in his breast pocket and handed it to Grimsche. "This is the location. Memorize it."

Grimsche glanced at it, and handed the paper back to Culver. The colonel lighted it with his cigarette lighter, held it until the flame almost touched his fingertips, and dropped it on the floor.

"While you're in Virginia," Culver said, "learn how to operate the weapon. Kyoto and I are relatively immobile, therefore detectable. *You* will probably use the completed weapon. In any case, it must be used."

"Yes sir," Grimsche said. "It'll be used." Without looking at Kyoto he

said, "I never forget my enemies.

"I know," Culver said. "Now get moving."

GRIMSCHÉ saluted, picked up the suitcase and hurried out. As soon as he was gone, Kyoto stood up and faced the colonel angrily. "Colonel Culver, I demand an explanation!"

Culver leaned back in his chair and closed his eyes, smiling faintly. "Consider Grimsché objectively, Kyoto. As a human being he has his deficiencies. But isn't he a perfect machine of war?"

"But his attitude—"

"His attitude toward you, personally, is unfortunate. Otherwise it's commendable, for it certainly complements his function." Culver opened his eyes and sat up abruptly. "Kyoto, I pride myself on one thing. *I know men.* Grimsché is the perfect, the ideal man for the job."

The colonel began to clean the bowl of his clay pipe with a matchstick. "Have to be careful with this," he said. "Souvenir of Connaught. Hate to go all the way back for another."

Kyoto walked to the window. Washington was strangely quiet now. Wearily, he tried to think. How could Grimsché be the right man? Would implacable, stupid hatred free them? Very unscientific... But then, this was soldier's business, and they had their own ways. Perhaps Culver was right.

He didn't know, or care any longer. He only wished he were home, and at peace.

TO: ARA ILDEK
NAM IV
SOLONES CLUSTER
GALAXY X32-A

SUBJECT: CIVILIZING EXPEDITION TO SOL III

FROM: MORDESH KDAK
ORGANIZER
EXPEDITION 87C6
GREETINGS:

The first two steps of our campaign have been completed. All symbolic documents of government have been seized, and will be sent to the Museum of Deviations on Illik II. All mechanical means of waging war have been destroyed, except for the isolated units undetected as yet. The armies of Sol III are dissolved by order of the governments; and *we* are the governments.

Still, individual Earthmen attempt to kill us, and to put our mechanicals out of order. So far, no Nam lives have been lost; nor have we been forced to the ultimate expedient of killing any Earthmen.

Since these people are city-builders, we have centralized ourselves. Our culture, after it has taken firm hold in the large population centers, will diffuse outward, to the rural areas. As far as I can tell, there is no danger inherent in our centralization. As I said before, the Earthmen command no energies past atomic.

We are now in full swing, employing Morgish's *Subliminal Training Techniques for Savage Peoples, Humanoid Type*. The Earthmen are able to see only the outward, obvious aspects of this campaign; the books, pamphlets, films, broadcasts, etc. These direct techniques meet with resistance and are supposed to; because of them, the Earthmen won't examine too closely the important internal changes which are being wrought in them.

The Earthmen feel that our indoctrination will not succeed. This belief is based upon their own clumsy attempts to indoctrinate each other, over several thousand years of recorded history. What they fail to grasp is the Conformity principle: Truth is irresistible. Their very skepticism aids us.

It is always interesting to observe the effects of subliminal indoctrination; the slow growth of doubt, the examination of ancient, fixed ideas;

uncertainty, fits of reverie, etc.

Soon the nodal point will be reached. Then, these ideas which have been slowly budding—and a thousand more—will suddenly blossom forth. The Earthmen won't even recognize their new selves. They will be civilized!

I have just now received a puzzling report. My population-trend calculator has detected a disturbing semi-isolated potential in or near this key city of Washington. The calculator gives a seventy-three percent probability that the potential is caused by a single individual, and assigns him a value of *plus twenty-three!*

Plus twenty-three is impossible, of course. Even I, as Organizer, don't have that high a probability-effects value. I'm having the machine overhauled; but to play safe, I'm assigning Gragash to make a search for this hypothetical individual, and, if he finds him, indoctrinate him directly.

I hope to have this planet civilized by the time my next message reaches you.

In Peace,
Mordek Kdak, Organizer

Grimsche had no trouble delivering the equipment to the hidden scientific group in Virginia. But then he was jobless; the quiet, dedicated specialists had nothing for him to do. During all their waking hours they worked on the weapon. Grimsche tried to help out, but only got in the way.

So he spent his time in the mountains, walking, hunting, waiting until he could be of use again.

Once he walked to the outskirts of a nearby town, and saw that the Nam had moved in. The sight filled him with wild, futile rage. Here was the enemy, and he could do nothing but wait. The townspeople seemed to be taking it calmly enough. As far as Grimsche could tell, from a distance, they seemed quite content.

It didn't disturb him. Civilians were weak; there were turncoats everywhere.

The scientists taught him on a model how the completed weapon would work. The controls were simple enough. He didn't care how complex it was inside, just as long as it worked.

In about a month the weapon was assembled, except for the germanium insets and the formula X524 components. Grimsche put on a quiet gray suit, took a .45 automatic, and left for Washington.

3



HE REACHED Washington just before sunset, and knew at once that the city had changed. But changed how? In what way? He couldn't tell.

Then he noticed the absence of noise. Washington had al-

ways been a loud, boisterous city; it was silent now. The few remaining cars drove slowly down the streets, almost hesitantly. People gathered in small groups on street corners, talking in hushed tones.

Grimsche slowed his pace to match the people around him. No one seemed in much of a rush to get anywhere, he thought. No one even seemed to be going to any particular place.

At that moment he noticed the man behind him.

He didn't know how long he had been followed. Sternly he kept his hand away from the .45, kept his pace slow. When he reached a cross-street, he turned.

The man turned with him.

Grimsche turned down three more blocks, the man still following. Then abruptly he entered a building and slid behind the big front door. The

man came inside and looked around, saw the door marked *Exit* in the back of the building, and hurried through it.

Grimsche went out the front door again. He cut through side streets, watching carefully, but wasn't followed again. Slightly out of wind, he entered the brownstone.



Kyoto was sprawled on the couch, asleep. Culver was sitting in an armchair, reading. The colonel was barefooted, dressed only in slacks and T-shirt. He looked extremely unmilitary.

"I was wondering when you'd get back," Culver said lazily, putting down his book. Kyoto awoke abruptly and sat up, blinking. "How's the weapon going?"

"Finished, except for the X524 stuff, and the germanium," Grimsche said.

Culver nodded. "They're working fast," he said to Kyoto. "Aren't they?"

"Very fast indeed," Kyoto said.

Outside the building, a loudspeaker blared:—"There are many human races in this galaxy. Remember that when you think of yourselves."

"What's that?" Grimsche asked.

"Oh, they're always broadcasting that stuff," Culver said. "About other races, and insularity, and cooperation. Quite a campaign."

"Why don't you cut the wires on that thing?" Grimsche asked.

"No use; they'd just fix it again."

"And now," the loudspeaker shouted, "we will bring you music from a planet named Ing. This music is based on a different tonal system than yours, an entirely different concept of music. But listen—it is no less beautiful for being different."

Music came over the loudspeaker.

"Pretty, isn't it?" Culver said.

"I'm tone-deaf," Grimsche said.

Colonel Culver found his clay pipe

and began to fill it. "So the weapon's almost done? Amazing speed."

"Amazing," Kyoto echoed.

Grimsche looked at them, puzzled. Something was different about them. He didn't care about Kyoto, but what happened to Colonel Culver?

There was a long silence, which didn't seem to bother Culver or Kyoto. Then Culver said, "Hungry, sergeant?"

"Yeah, I guess I am," Grimsche admitted. "Haven't eaten all day."

"Come on." Culver stood up and led Grimsche to the kitchen. "Got something here you'll like." He opened the refrigerator and took out a dish filled with a brownish-gray substance. "Go ahead, try it."

"What is it?"

"Something the Nam have been passing out. Comes from a planet called Mehvis. Damndest stuff you ever tasted."

"No thank you," Grimsche said. He found a loaf of bread in the refrigerator, lettuce and cold steak, and a bottle of beer. Culver hummed abstractedly as he ate.

"Sir," Grimsche said finally, "is there anything wrong?"

"Wrong?"

"I don't know," Grimsche said; there's something funny here. Has that Japanese been trying anything?"

"Kyoto? Lord, no! What put that idea in your head?"

"You don't seem the same any more," Grimsche said.

Culver thought about it for a few moments, puffing on his pipe. "You may be right, Grimsche; but the change is natural. We had always assumed that we were the only beings in creation. Now, all of a sudden we meet an extraterrestrial race. We find that there are hundreds of thousands of inhabited planets—well, it makes you think."

"It doesn't make me think," Grimsche said.

"It makes you wonder about a lot

of things," Culver went on. "Things like destiny, peace, war, life, meaning. A lot of things."

Silently they walked back into the living room.

The music on the loudspeaker stopped, and a voice said, "Remember, for the full explanation of the Nam truth doctrines, be sure to read textbook 23, the one titled *Empirical Techniques to Truth*."

Grimsche said, "have you got that formula X524 stuff for the weapon?"

Both Culver and Kyoto looked startled. Then Kyoto went to a closet and took out a small satchel. "Everything's here," he said.

"Do you have a plan of battle, sir?" Grimsche asked Culver, taking the satchel.

"Yes, certainly," Culver said, speaking very rapidly now. "You will bring these components to Virginia. When the weapon is fully assembled, you'll bring it back. It's portable, isn't it? Good. You've learned how to operate it? Good. The Nam are centralized in one building. Ridiculous, isn't it? And more of them are arriving every day. Sitting ducks; we'll go up there, aim the weapon, and blooey!"

The colonel stopped, his face flushed. He appeared bewildered. "What was I saying? Oh yes, of course. You have your orders, sergeant. By the way, did you know that the Nam have a one-hour cure for schizophrenia?"

"A wonderful process," Kyoto murmured. "But their approach to economic stability—"

"Free enterprise," Culver said, "but they solved the boom-bust cycle. You really should read some of their books, Grimsche. Amazing documents. Even after we've driven them off, we'll be indebted to them for some time."

Grimsche looked at the book Culver had been reading. It was titled *Empirical Techniques to Truth*. He opened it at random, and read, "It has long been considered that truth is

vague, relative, a matter of shadings from black (false) into white (truth). The unreality of this point of view can be perceived by taking..."

Grimsche closed the book with a snap. "Goodbye," he said, and left.

AFTER HE was gone, Culver turned to Kyoto. "Did you sense something strange about the sergeant?"

"Yes, now that you mention it," Kyoto said. "I don't know what it could be."

"I don't either."

They thought in silence for long minutes. Then Kyoto said, "I know. It was when he left. He didn't call you 'sir'."

"That's right," Culver said thoughtfully. "He didn't." Culver picked up his book again. The loudspeaker began to play Dellian drum-music.

Outside, it was twilight. Grimsche hesitated a moment, looking up and down the quiet, deserted street. He gripped the satchel firmly and started walking.

Something was going wrong already. He could sense it. Had Colonel Culver given up?

It didn't seem possible. He *knew* Colonel Culver. There had never been a better officer, and good officers didn't just change like that. Did they?

Grimsche tried to examine his own attitudes. He decided that there was nothing wrong in Culver learning things from the Nam. Perhaps they did have some wonderful things. That didn't alter the important fact; the Nam were invaders, enemies. You don't make friends with your enemies, they have to be destroyed. *Destroyed*, to the last man.

The Colonel would be all right, Grimsche decided, once he was away from the Japanese.

As he crossed the street, he noticed a man following him. Grimsche slipped the .45 into his hand, released the safe-

ties and cooked it. This was as good a place as any.

Gragash smiled to himself when he saw the Earthman stop, turn and face him. Excellent; that meant that the man wanted to talk. Gragash walked up to him slowly, so as not to startle him.

The Earthman was big, self-contained, gloomy. He stood perfectly erect, motionless. But there was something unnatural about his posture. It was as though the man were standing outside himself, saying, 'this is how I should stand.'

Gragash topped, ten feet from the Earthman. There was no sense in startling him; this man would have to be handled with great delicacy, great care. "Pardon me," Gragash said. "Could I have a word with you?"

"Sure," the Earthman said. Gragash could detect no involuntary tensing of muscles. Was this man really relaxed? Or was his self-control almost superhuman.

"I am a Nam," Gragash said directly.

The Earthman nodded.

"You seem to have a fixed, almost maniacal idea about us," Gragash went on. "I'd like to tell you a few facts." He hesitated. The Earthman's stony face was unreadable, as though his features were carved of stone. It was growing darker. Gragash considered turning on a defensive screen, but decided against it; he wanted this man to realize that he was a friend. Besides, he would have time, as soon as he detected the muscle-tension that forwarns an attack.

"You are unhappy," Gragash said, "and I can offer you a functional insight into that unhappiness. You—"

Gragash never saw the blow that hit him. He staggered back, trying to turn on his defensive screen, realizing how seriously he had underestimat-

ed his man. The Earthman's conscious control was miraculous, and insane. The action had been planned, but concealed. Schizophrenic personalities were able to...

The Earthman lunged forward, metal gleaming in his hand. "Wait!" Gragash screamed. But the blow fell, and Gragash stopped thinking.

TO: ARA ILDEK
NAM IV
SOLONES CLUSTER
GALAXY X32-A

SUBJECT: CIVILIZING EXPEDITION TO SOL III

FROM: MORDESH KDAK
ORGANIZER
EXPEDITION 87C6

GREETINGS:

The great day has come! The emergent point has been reached, and successfully passed! Another planet enters the fold of civilization!

Not every individual, of course. We weren't able to reach every isolated little group on the planet. But the huge population centers, the vast bulk of the planet is now civilized. The culture will diffuse outward, irrevocably. For this planet is now sane.

You can imagine the shock to the Earthmen when the nodal point was finally reached. There is no experience like it. For an analogue, I could only take the butterfly, breaking out of its chrysalis, or perhaps the birth-process itself. Up to that point, the Earthmen had been suspicious. Their early panic had given way to hatred. Then, slowly, a growing awareness. And finally—insight!

Since they can handle it sanely, we have given the Earthmen the rest of the necessary information.

1. That we, the Nam, intervened only because Earth was on the verge

of self-destruction. *Not* through self-interest.

2. That Earth is now entitled to join (or not join, although it isn't usual) the free planets of the Confederacy; to share equally in prosperity, trade and invention.

3. That the entire Nam expedition is leaving at once, as soon as we can assemble our equipment. Another planet, where a genocidal atomic war is underway, needs our attention.

The Earthmen will have no trouble reforming their governments; or government, I should say, since there is now no bar to their ancient dream of a world state. We are leaving them, as usual, spaceship prototypes, and anything else they might find useful.

In a separate report I have listed the reactions of the Earthmen. Summarizing them, I can say: As usual, they originally considered ours a punitive expedition, and were shocked at its real purpose. They felt that altruism is a difficult ideal, instead of a workable actuality. Also, during the indoctrination many of them felt that they were being 'hypnotized,' or 'brain-washed.' Nothing could be farther from the truth. Gambits were introduced solely for the purpose of allowing them to evaluate on all levels the truth we brought them.

There is tragedy in this victory, too. Gragash has been killed by the Earthman he was to indoctrinate; the Earthman has vanished from sight again.

His probability-effects value has gone up to *plus twenty-five*. Therefore he must be in possession of a weapon utilizing trans-atomic power.

I must admit that I am filled with panic. Gragash was our only competent tracker. Influencing population trends isn't difficult; but picking one man out of a population of millions—nearly impossible. We do have one advantage, though. We have a workable construct of him, assembled from his personality as expressed through action. I have broadcast this construct

to the war-mechanicals. If they find him, they are to request him to surrender, once; if he doesn't, they are empowered to kill him.

This step is, perhaps, a measure of my own inadequacy; but I must guard my expedition.

What bothers me, is, *why* is he doing it? He must know our motives by now. Why does he persist?

We are assembling in Washington now, preparing our departure.

In Peace,
Mordek Kdak, Organizer

4



GRIMSCHKE had to wait another week before the technicians had the weapon assembled, and were certain that it would work. Then they built it into Grimsche's suitcase, with the firing controls on the outside, near the handle. Grimsche left as soon as it was completed. He drove to the outskirts of Washington; then, noticing that there were very few cars around, he proceeded on foot, toward Culver's brownstone.

A man walked up to him. "Happy day, friend."

"Sure," Grimsche said cautiously, his fingers near the firing control.

"Here," the man said, handing him a sheaf of bills. "Take them."

Grimsche hesitated, then took the bills. "Why?" he asked.

"Doublefold," the man said. "First of all, I can't use all I have. Overcompensation. Second, you look like you need something. I don't know if this is it, but here's hoping it makes you happy."

The man walked quickly away from Grimsche, whistling. Grimsche looked at the pile of bills, then stuffed them

in his pocket. He decided that the man must have been crazy.

But the whole city seemed strange. Grimsche tried to analyze it. The buildings were the same, the streets, the stores. The people were—different.

How? Suddenly Grimsche knew. They were happy, every damned one. He had never seen so many happy people in his life. It made him slightly ill.

On a street corner a group of men were talking. Grimsche heard one man say, "...just as though I was turned inside out. Brother, I really *saw* myself. Not very pretty."

"We're not perfect yet," another man said.

"No, thank God," the first man put in quickly. "Perfection is a ridiculous ideal. The thing is—now we are at least capable of function, without tripping each other up out of sheer ignorant perversity."

Grimsche walked on, thinking that he was probably the only sane man in the city. Civilians, he thought contemptuously. Licking the hand of their conquerors.

But walking made him nervous, for he realized that he was the only person around with a set, grim face. He couldn't disguise that. He hailed a passing cab.

The driver looked him over, then shook his head slowly. "Climb out, friend."

"Why?"

"There's something wrong with you. I don't know just what, but five minutes with you and my day'll be ruined."

"You can't put me out like that," Grimsche said angrily; "I'll report you to the company."

"Go ahead. If they fire me, I'll take up gold-mining. But I don't even think the boss'll talk to you."

Grimsche's first urge was to push the driver's face in. But he couldn't take the chance. To hell with the mad-

man, he decided, and climbed out.

The walk to the brownstone was a nightmare for Grimsche. He didn't know these people any more. They weren't Earthmen; they weren't normal. He quickened his pace, holding the suitcase tightly. Twice he saw the great Nam war-mechanicals walking the street, but he cut out of their way each time.

COLONEL Culver and Kyoto were in the kitchen of the brownstone, drinking beer.

"Hello, brother," Kyoto called gaily as he walked in. "Have a beer."

Grimsche ignored him and looked at Culver. The Colonel waved him to a chair.

"The weapon's ready," Grimsche said. "Let's start."

"Sit down," Culver said. "The plans are changed."

Grimsche sat down, putting the suitcase between his knees. He slid his hands into his pockets, gripping the butt of the .45.

"This is going to be hard to explain, if you don't feel it," Culver said.

"I'm listening."

"We've been very wrong about the Nam," Kyoto said, anxious to help. "They came here only to help us; you can understand that, can't you, sergeant?"

"Go on," Grimsche said.

"You're not listening," Culver said.

"Sure I am."

"All right. Look at it this way," Culver said, taking out his clay pipe and placing it on the kitchen table. "We on Earth have been fighting, killing, murdering, cheating, lying since the dawn of time. But not because we wanted to! That's been our constant tragedy. Few of us are evil. We want to do good. We reach for the truth, but it always turns out to be illusion."

"That is over now," Kyoto broke in eagerly. "The truth is really very simple, very constant. Once you see it, there's no more confusion."

"Right. You're all saints," Grimsche said; "I can see that."

"No!" Culver shouted suddenly. "We're men, with all the problems of men. But we are now sufficiently enlightened to work rationally on those problems. And we have a peaceful, cooperative galaxy to help us. And, in time, to receive our help."

"So?"

"So naturally the attack is off. I'm going to destroy that weapon now." Culver reached for the suitcase, but Grimsche had the .45 out.

"The attack isn't off," Grimsche said.

"You don't understand—" Kyoto began. Then he saw Grimsche's face and retreated to the far corner of the kitchen.

"I understand enough," Grimsche said. "They came here without our asking them. They defeated us. *They invaded us.* This war isn't over yet, not for me. Not until I've had my inning."

"Grimsche, Grimsche," Culver said sadly. "You're insane. Don't you understand what I'm saying? There never was any war! What you're considering is murder."

"I don't forget my enemies," Grimsche said, standing up and lifting the suitcase.

Culver was silent for a few moments. Then he said, "It's my fault, Grimsche. I picked you—and I picked too well. You're my own personal monster, my golem; I feel like Frankenstein. And now you're turning on your creator." He stepped forward. "Give me the suitcase; that's an order."

Grimsche shot him in the chest. The colonel was knocked back by the force of the .45. He stumbled against the kitchen table, and his clay pipe fell to the floor, shattered. Culver dropped to his knees and began to grope for the fragments. Grimsche shot him again.

"And now you," Grimsche said to

Kyoto, standing in the corner. He shot him through the head. "That settles that score." He shoved the .45 back in his pocket, and, holding the suitcase carefully, hurried out the door. As he ran, he felt an enormous exhilaration grip him. The dice were thrown! The moment of action had come at last, when he, he alone, would avenge Earth.

Waiting for him in the street were two Nam robots. A small crowd of people had gathered.

"Better give yourself up," a man advised.

"You're sick."

"You're insane."

The robots moved forward. Grimsche aimed the suitcase, adjusted quickly for range, and fired. The robots, the crowd, and a nearby building vanished.

Grimsche began to trot toward the building that housed the Nam. He hoped he wouldn't be picked off before he got there. It wouldn't be fair, he thought. But everyone was a traitor now, perhaps everyone on Earth. He was the last loyal soldier. What in hell did it matter if the Nam brought gifts? They had landed on the soil of Earth. Reason enough to kill them.

They'd get him, sooner or later, even with the marvelous weapon. But he'd get them first!

He cut down a mob of traitors, blocking his way to the Nam building.

TO: ARA ILDEK
NAM IV
SOLONES CLUSTER
GALAXY X32-A

SUBJECT: CIVILIZING EXPEDITION TO SOL III

FROM: MORDESH KDAK
ORGANIZER
EXPEDITION 87C6

GREETINGS:

This will be my last message from Sol III, as we are about to leave. My force is centralized here, awaiting the ships. It has been a tiring mission, but a satisfactory one.

It is a thrill, to land on a planet full of howling savages, and leave peace and cooperation behind. This planet is now ready to take its rightful place in galactic affairs. Soon, perhaps, they will send out expeditions like this one, and aid us in the great work of civilization.

A report has just come in. The Earthman has been detected in the city. He has killed a number of his own people, and destroyed two Nam war-mechanicals. According to the report, he is moving toward our building. I have given orders to have him killed at once. Too many lives have been lost because of him.

It's strange—but this is the archetype of the Earthman who has always delayed his people's progress. He is dedicated, incorruptible. More intelligent men find him useful—to their

sorrow, because intelligent men often change their minds; this kind of man is unchangeable, implacable. And this is the height of insanity; to so close your mind that nothing outside can be perceived.

Minutes have passed. The Earthman still is not dead. We are not used to killing; our minds shrink from the necessity. And this man is cunning, feral. Perhaps we are too civilized.

Ara, it seems to me that this planet has been bathed in blood so long... perhaps it will require ours to purge it. This is a ridiculous fancy. Please strike it from the report.

Another report. The Earthman has been seen outside our building. Be sure to tell the Council not to judge the planet by the man. Earth is ready; she is civilized. Only unforeseen factors have produced this.

They are converging on him now. They have shot him! But I fear it is too late. Even dying, he is aiming the weapon—



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These, and others, are in the October issue of

DYNAMIC SCIENCE FICTION



A searchlight-beam made a circle in the sand before Warren.

NEW WEAPON

A "Dateline Mars" Story

by Richard Wilson

(illustrated by Tom Beecham)

"A reporter's job is to gather news, not to make it,"
Scott Warren told Kathy.

THE GIRL was about twenty-three and she was a redhead. Her name was Kathy Brand and she had worked for a rival news service back on Earth. She didn't tell Scott Warren what had brought her to Mars—she just said she wanted to work for Galactic News at the Iopa bureau.

"I'll do anything," she said. "Reporting, rewrite, scripting, research—whatever you need. How about it, Chief?"

Scott *did* have an opening for a reporter, and that put him at a disadvantage. He didn't like to lie, and yet he had a feeling about women in news-work. Some were fine; others became prima donnas, or got hard as nails—and some of them tried to get romantic with the boss. Scott was the boss, and he was single.

He looked at the pert figure sitting in the visitors' chair beside his desk, riffled again through the papers she'd brought—recommendations, all of them sounding sincere, samples of her work—and admitted cautiously: "We do have an opening, Miss Brand. But I don't think the pay would interest you—"

"Good," she said. She smiled and her gray eyes crinkled at the edges. She stripped off her hat and tossed her red hair. "You're sweet. When do I start?"

Scott sighed: it was beginning already—but the Iopa bureau *did*

need someone. "You can start right now, Miss Brand. There's a news conference at 'he Government Building in half an hour. We're short-staffed and I was going to cover it myself. Commissioner Grax, of New Weapons. Know where it is?"

"Sure, Chief. How do I file?"

Scott pulled open a drawer. "Here's a wrist-talkie. If it's hot, call us on Wave Four; if it's routine, come back and write your story."

"Right, Chief," she said, and stood up.

"Call me Scott," he said. "We're all on a first-name basis around here."

She smiled at him. "That makes me Kathy; I think I'm going to like it here."

"I hope so," he said, and wondered if it wouldn't have been better to defer the first-name custom in this case. "Need a salary advance—Kathy?"

"Nope, thanks. I've still got some in the hope-chest."

Scott would have preferred another phrase for it. She was too pretty, damn it.

"Okay," he said. "See you later."

"I'm off."

ONE REWRITE man was busy and another had just stepped out when the call came in on Wave Four. Scott Warren took it himself.

"Flash," said the voice of Kathy Brand. "World Government announces outlaws have super-weapon."

It was flash stuff, all right. Scott tore the eight words out of the typewriter, sailed the sheet to an operator. "Break for this flash," he said. Then back to the girl.

"Go ahead. Dictate the urgent," he told her.

Kathy's voice was cool and clear. *"Dateline. Commissioner Grax of the New Weapons section revealed at World Government headquarters on Mars today that the outlaw state has a super-weapon. Grax gave a few details, but warned that the guerilla warfare with the outlaws will have to proceed along new lines. He said all possible defensive measures are being taken to safeguard the lives of W. G. troops, whose scouts first reported the mystery-weapon being tested near Revo in the North. Grax did not disclose whether the principle of the super-weapon is known to World Government. Period, end."*

Scott got that page off and said: "Good work, Kathy. Want to take a few minutes to get your lead together and call back?"

"I think I can dictate it now, if you can take it down."

"Shoot," he said.

As he was typing it, the operator handed him a circuit-message from Galactics Earth control bureau in New York. *"Upfollow Grax soonest,"* it said.

"Tell them 'Upcoming,'" said Scott, "and keep the channel clear for it."

Within ten minutes, Kathy Brand had dictated a neat, punchy story. Grax's news-conference had been short, and Kathy packed in all the details in a dramatic yarn that took practically no editing. Anything further for now would be "with" or "add" material based on the background and reaction. Scott put Trowbridge to work on the background, and alerted the men on the presidential and parliamentary beats to get the reaction.

He had just clicked off the commu-

nicator when Kathy came in. "Nice job, Kathy. Swell."

"We beat Interplanetary News on it, at least." She grinned. "The I. N. man had the hiccups."

The night desk crew had come on duty and were filled in on the story; so there was nothing more for Scott Warren to do except take the new staffer out to dinner. It was an office-custom for the bureau chief to buy the newcomer a steak and tell about the organization—and Scott was damned if he was going to break the rule simply because the new staffer happened to be a good-looking girl.

"Uh, Kathy," he said.

"Yes?" She was closing her desk and getting out her lipstick.

"Did you have any plans for dinner?"

"Why no, Scott; I'd love to."

"It's business," he explained. "It's part of my job to tell new staffers some of the things about Galactic here, and there's a steak-house where we generally go—just down the street."

"I'd still love to," said Kathy. "Soon's I put on my mouth."

It was a mighty fine mouth, Scott had to admit, but he admitted it only to himself.

They were having pre-dinner cocktails in New York Dan's. "What do you know about Galactic?" Scott asked the girl. "You must have known something, to come to us."

"It's a pretty big outfit," Kathy said. "And a good one. I know, for instance, that it was Mercer of G. N. who interviewed the Green Arrow, and then there was that Scott Warren story that won the Ballinger Prize. It was a sweet yarn, Scott."

"Thanks. You write a mean story yourself. We've got a good team here, and we're all newspeople first of all. That means we don't take handouts

from press-agents, or slant our stories to suit the politics of some medium-high official in a government office; or, if we manage to dig up any facts on a yarn, we don't withhold them from the police or any other authority. We're reporters—not detectives or secret agents—and our job is to report the news, not to make it."

"Don't worry about that," said the girl. "Do you happen to know Charlie Keyser? He worked for Galactic for a while in New York, before he went up to Alaska to get away from civilization."

"Sure, I know Charlie. One of the best sportswriters in the business—used to be."

It was pretty late when they left the steak-house and Scott saw Kathy home. He had never spent quite so much time filling in a new staffer.

SCOTT TOLD Kathy the next morning, "There's nothing special for you today; probably won't be anything fresh on the new-weapon thing till the outlaws start using it against the troopers. I'm going to put you on general assignment. Very general. Wander around town—the government offices, the slums, the spaceport—anywhere your nose takes you. Get acquainted with Iopa, from a news-sense. Maybe you'll get something, maybe not. We've developed some first-rate feature-stuff that way. Don't worry about turning in a story, if there isn't one anywhere; it'll be good experience for later, if nothing else."

"Right. Do I check in at the end of the day?"

"Be a good idea. 'Bye."

"'Bye."

But Kathy Brand didn't check in at the end of the day. By mid-evening Scott was still in the office and had begun to get uneasy. "Damn women," he said, and called her landlady. Miss Brand wasn't there; hadn't been there since early morning. Scott called head-

quarters of the World Government troopers, on a hunch. The public information-officer had long since gone home and Scott called him there.

"Yes, Miss Brand was in today. She asked a lot of questions about the fighting with the outlaws and then she left. Didn't say where she was going."

"Thanks, Ken." Scott disconnected.

He was worrying a fingernail when the communicator buzzed. "Galactic News."

"This is Major Loftus, Second Brigade at Revo. Do you have a girl named Brand working for you?"

"Yes. Kathy Brand. Redhead. Why?"

"That's the one. She was out here today. On assignment, she said. Going through the whole camp, talking to people."

"We've got a regular man with your outfit. Did you tell her that?"

"Yes, but she said she was on special assignment, and her credentials were okay. She's gone now, and I thought you should know. Who's this?"

"Warren, bureau chief. Where'd she go, Major?"

"Prevailed on Transportation to give her a sand-car and headed out in the desert. A sergeant saw her go in the direction of the outlaw-lines. Haven't heard from her since."

Scott Warren took a hack to the spaceport. The Galactic News air-car was on the line, being warmed up for him, as he'd ordered. It was white, truce-color, with *Correspondent* in big letters on each side. Sometimes this was respected by the outlaws; sometimes it wasn't. Scott had to take a chance on that. He got in and took off.

His control-board told him when he was over the W. G. troopers headquarters at Revo. In a few minutes

more, he could make out what must be the outlaw-camp beyond. A cluster of pre-fab huts in the desert. No lights. He sent a message on the clear all-wave channel.

"Correspondent in white air-car. Requests landing instructions."

The answer came immediately. "Put down at 216:43. Come out unarmed. You will be killed if you deviate from instructions."

Scott set the controls for 216:43 and waited. The automatics took over the landing. He stepped out onto the sand in the Martian night. It was cold.

He waited many minutes in eerie silence. Then a searchlight beam stabbed out and made a circle in the sand in front of him. A voice from a loudspeaker said: "The beam will move. Follow it."

The beam began to move. Scott followed it. About an eighth of a mile farther on the beam stopped, its circle illuminating a windowless metal hut. "Enter," said the voice.

Scott went in. The door clicked behind him. There was no latch on the inside.

The voice spoke again. Now it came from a vision screen built into one wall. But the screen was blank. The voice said: "Why have you come?"

Scott decided he wouldn't be the first to mention the girl. "I'm a correspondent," he said. "I request an interview with your leader."

"Hold your credentials close to the screen. It is voice two-way, vision one-way."

Scott did as he was told.

"Apparently in order," said the voice. It spoke almost without an accent. "What is the subject of your proposed interview?"

"The new weapon which World Government reports you possess." Scott knew the outlaws monitored the news from Iopa and that this was no breach of security.

"No interviews will be permitted

on that subject," the voice snapped. "You may leave."

The door clicked open and the searchlight beam stabbed down into the doorway.

"Then another subject," said Scott. "A statement of your aims. Galactic News likes to give all sides of an issue."

The door clicked shut again. The voice said: "Rest. There will be no interview tonight. Perhaps tomorrow. All facilities for your comfort are in the hut."

But just before the screen went silent Scott heard another voice in the background say: "Take the girl—"

The couch was comfortable, but Scott spent a sleepless night.

IN THE windowless hut, there was no way to tell it was morning except by his watch. Scott fiddled with the vision screen, but there was no response. He was hungry; he lighted a cigaret and rubbed a hand over the bristles on his face.

The door clicked open, the sunlight almost blinded him. "Through the door and to the left," said the voice. "You will see a large building, flanked by two smaller ones. Go directly to the large one."

Scott's air-car was standing where he had set it down. There was a two-man guard at the door. Other outlaw troops could be seen here and there in the camp; they paid little attention to him. Scott heard no signs of battle. He walked to the big building. A guard opened the door for him and another inside directed him down a hallway. A third guard at the end of the hall opened another door and he was in a bare room with a huge desk at one end. A Martian in a plain black uniform sat behind it. There was no one else in the room.

The Martian was slender, from what the newsman could see of him, with his thick black hair hanging down behind to the collar of his uniform.

The dark skin was stretched tight over the big bones of his face, which was totally expressionless.

Scott walked to the desk. There was no place for him to sit. The Martian got up and extended a hand; this surprised Scott, but he shook it. The Martian's face remained expressionless but his voice was cordial when he said: "How do you do, Mr. Warren. My name, for security reasons, will not be mentioned. My position must also remain secret, but in your story you may refer to me as a high official in the Citizens' Army—or, as you undoubtedly will term it, the outlaw-army."

"Thank you for receiving me," said Scott. The Martian's voice was not that of the vision-screen, nor was his face familiar.

Scott asked about the new weapon, just for the record. He got a bland smile in reply. The Martian said: "I think the phrase is 'No comment.'"

The newsman shrugged and asked other questions. The Martian answered about as he'd expected—in propaganda-laden sentences about 'Mars for the Martians', 'breaking the chains of Earth imperialism and the arrogant deception of the puppet organization that called itself World Government'. Scott took notes, although it was familiar stuff. He'd heard it on the outlaw-radio and read it in pro-outlaw pamphlets distributed in Iopa. This would be news only because it was a personal interview in outlaw territory, and because it was granted immediately after the disclosure of the new weapon.

Scott's mind raced ahead of his questions, seeking an angle for which to ask about Kathy Brand without tipping his own hand.

"I've heard that you have women soldiers among your troops," said Scott. "Is that because of a shortage of men?"

"On the contrary," the outlaw of-

ficial said. "It is a reflection of the unquenchable desire of every citizen—regardless of sex—to achieve the liberation of his or her people. Unlike the chauvinistic World Government army, where women perform only such menial duties as mess and quartermaster, our women fight shoulder to shoulder with the men."

"I see," said Scott.

"There is no distinction or discrimination. It is for this reason that thousands of volunteers flock to our ranks from the enslaved cities—women as well as men—and specialists, as well as soldiers. The Citizens' Army holds out opportunities for intelligent women which your decadent form of tyranny cannot offer—either to women of Mars or of your own planet. Only yesterday, in fact—"

Slips, thought Scott. But he kept his pencil working and didn't look up during the pause.

"Only yesterday, in fact," the Martian outlaw went on, "we received an encouraging message of support signed by a thousand women of Iopa—many of them Earth-people. There's a local angle for your story."

That obviously was not what the Martian had started out to say and Scott knew it. He looked up now and saw the other's eyes fixed on him.

"That terminates the interview," said the Martian.

"I have a few more questions," said Scott. He needed to learn more about what happened yesterday. There was little doubt now that Kathy Brand was somewhere in the camp—but where and under what circumstances he had yet to learn.

"No more questions," said the Martian firmly. He stood up, shook hands and barked toward the door. It opened and a guard put himself at attention.

"Mr. Warren is leaving," said the outlaw official. "See that he is escorted safely to his air-car."

There was nothing Scott could do; he went out, followed closely by the guard.

THE BOMBARDMENT started as Scott was within a hundred yards of the air-car. The blasts not only sent lethal steel fragments flying, but billowed out black fog designed to disorganize the enemy defenses. In two steps it was pitchdark, and Scott had lost the guard. The air-car was straight ahead. Scott could have reached it, probably; he could have taken off and would have been out of the battle zone in minutes.

That would have been the rational thing to do. He was a newsman—and he had a good story to take back. With a new lead now: *"In an interview with a high outlaw-official, only minutes before a World Government bombardment of the enemy headquarters began..."* or some such thing. He was a newsman, Scott reminded himself, not a secret agent, not a damn fool hero.

But he was also a man, and civilization probably never would go so far as to wipe out the protective instinct a female could engender in the other sex. Scott veered right and walked silently through the blackness that had come at midmorning. The fog was harmless to the system, Scott knew; but all the same he breathed shallowly.

Having made up his mind to look for Kathy, Scott now had to figure out where to look. On a hunch he made for what he thought was the direction of a hut he'd noticed when he had walked to the building of the interview. The hut had antennae sticking out of the low roof. They were the only antennae he had seen, and there was a chance that it was the outlaw communications-center.

Despite his caution, Scott walked smack into the side of something. There was a low hum from inside it, barely audible. Scott felt his way along the wall, came to a corner, followed it around and felt a window. By putting

his face close, he could make out the interior. Two Martians were sitting at a bank of communications-screens, their backs to him.

There was an explosion, louder and closer than the others, and Scott fell flat. Another blast came, still closer, and there was a hammering of metal on metal and a shattering of glass. After a while Scott got up. The window had been broken and the black fog was seeping into the communications hut. He watched it curl into the room and saw the Martians lying on the floor, unconscious or dead. Several of the communications-screens had been wrecked by the steel fragments that had ripped out the window.

Scott eased himself over the sill. A quick look around in the gathering darkness convinced him there was no one else in the hut. Both Martians were dead.

The black fog was beginning to fill the room. In half a minute it would be pitch black. Quickly, Scott flipped all the screens to on, receiving only. Some of them remained blank—either because the blast had put them out of operation or because they were trained on something outside in the black fog—or because they had been damaged at their transmitting terminals.

In all, six of the screens produced images, but he had to look at only one of them—the one in which Kathy Brand could be seen, sitting in an arm chair, her red hair falling over the back of it in a long bob, her hand holding a cigaret with which she was gesturing. The audio picked up her voice, saying to someone not visible on the screen: "Now, really, Captain, charming as you are, I don't believe this is the time for romance."

Just as a figure moved into range of the transmitter, wherever it was, the black fog obscured it. Scott pushed his nose flat against the screen, but by now it was too dark to see anything more.

But the audio was still there. A male voice—speaking English with no accent that Scott could place, was saying: "Kathy, your beauty turns war into peace. We are adrift in space, severed from the planets, suspended in time—alone. . ."

Then, although Scott's ears seemed to ache with the strain, there was absolute, maddening silence.

SCOTT WARREN stumbled blindly through the black fog. He knew specifically where he was going, because he'd made a mental note of the coordinates before the fog had closed in on the screen focused on Kathy. He also had a defogger, which he'd taken from the dead Martians—along with two Q-guns. But the building in which Kathy and her unknown admirer were doing whatever they were doing was a relative pinpoint in the blackness surrounding him. There could be any number of things between it and him, other buildings, gun emplacements, enemy troops—or death from a W. G. shell.

He cursed Kathy and whatever she was up to. He didn't have enough facts to know whether she was the smart girl-reporter—too smart for her own good—trying to make a hit with the boss by risking her neck for a story, or whether she was what the outlaw-official had implied by his silence, a convert to the rebel cause. Whatever the truth, she was a damn fool, and he was a bigger one for chasing after her.

Scott stumbled over something he couldn't see and the jog shuddered his stomach, reminding him that he hadn't eaten all day. Damn women! Damn Kathy! And who was that character she was making eyes at; what was he up to with his "severed from the planets" talk? That seemed altogether too clear, and as he bit his way through the fog he decided that he didn't like at all what might be happening right now.

Scott had strapped the defogger on

his wrist. Its own anti-black light made it possible to consult its face when he held it close to his eyes. He checked the coordinates again, and found that he'd veered to the left of his destination. He corrected his angle and started off again. For what seemed like hours he stumbled on, stopping frequently to check his course; correcting it; bumping into things or avoiding them by a kind of instinct. Actually, only fifteen minutes had passed when he stopped against a hunk of metal and made a final check. This, near-miraculously, was it. He felt around till he came across a door. He found the latch with his left hand, tested and felt it give and held the Q-gun ready in his right hand. Then, with adrenalin shooting into his bloodstream, he shoved open the door.

It was completely black inside. He let the door close softly behind him and listened. Nothing. The blackness, he realized after a short wait, wasn't the black of the fog, but normal absence of light in a windowless place. Soon he could make out a glow in the distance and, as his eyes adjusted, he saw that there was a door at the end of a corridor.

Scott inched toward it and then listened. The light came through a crack under the door, but there was nothing to be heard. Then Kathy laughed. Scott lunged in, holding one gun and drawing the other.

Kathy was still sitting in the chair. She whirled around at Scott's noisy entrance, sending her companion into a sprawl on the rich rug covering the floor of this luxury bombardment shelter. The companion was a Martian and he'd been leaning over her, very close, a moment before.

"Okay," said Scott. "Stay right where you are, both of you." To himself he said: "...while I figure out what I'm going to do next."

"Scott!" said the girl. She half-rose, then sat back as his gun gestured. "What on earth. . .?"

"Wrong planet, my dear," said the Martian. He sat up on the rug, carefully, making no sudden move.

"Who are you?" Scott asked him. He glanced swiftly around the room. It was sumptuously furnished, but there was no one else there. He could see no sign of the camera-lens which had carried the scene to the observation hut—nor could he be sure that another receiver wasn't taking this all in. For that matter, the fog could be lifting outside and the hut he'd broken into could have been re-manned. This was no time to relax.

"Captain Joro of the Citizens' Army," the Martian said. "I believe the rules of your military require me to say no more."

The Martian was a handsome guy, as Martians went, and Scott had to admit that some of them went pretty far in their faculty of being attractive to Earth women. This Captian Joro was taller than the average Martian, with a chest less barrel-like than most, set into an erect trunk which even Scott had to concede bristled with animal magnetism in its neat, well-cut uniform. Joro had thick black hair and prominent facial features, none of which was in the least repulsive. In an extravagant moment at his desk in the newsroom Scott might have described the eyes as piercing and intelligent and the demeanor as one less arrogant than determined.

Scott took this in at a glance, which also noticed that Kathy was sitting tense as a spring—with a look on her face that seemed to be trying to tell him something.

The newsman said: "You're both coming with me as soon as the bombardment stops. I don't know what this is all about, but we'll find somebody who may be able to sift sense out of it."

Kathy said: "I believe you came all the way out here, risking your life, to rescue me." She got up and came toward Scott. "That's sweet."

"Sit down, Kathy." Scott took a step backward. Just then the girl stumbled and fell forward. Before he knew what was happening she had knocked into him, and he was flat on the rug, both hands pinned by the Martian, with the guns being forced out of his grasp.

SCOTT WARREN wished fervently that he'd paid some attention to his feeling about women. If he had, and if he hadn't hired Kathy Brand, he wouldn't be trussed up in a chair now—in some incongruously-plush hideaway in the middle of outlaw-territory, feeling more incompetent and stupid than he'd ever felt in his life.

"I'm glad we're back to normal," Kathy was saying. "Now, Captain, what were we talking about?"

"Something that must be deferred to a more propitious moment, I regret to say."

"Shall we talk shop, then?" asked the redhead.

My father told me never to trust redheads, Scott told himself. He wiggled as surreptitiously as he could but he was securely bound with a silken cord which gave not at all.

"Which particular category of shop?" asked Joro. "Your part-time news-work, or your recent conversion to anti-imperialism?"

The girl looked sideways at Scott and said: "I told you that my work as a reporter had its purpose. Reporters learn a lot more than they write—off-the-record stuff that at World Government official, for instance, will give to accredited correspondents, and which the reporters keep to themselves. There was plenty in that new weapon story that I didn't write—that I didn't tell anybody at Galactic News, either. And so I break my neck to get to you people and what happens? Instead of anybody listening to me, I get the runaround. They fob me off on some administrative junior

officer who wouldn't know a blueprint from a skymap, and he puts me through a grilling about everything but what's important. With time out for what passes for wooing, Martian-style."

"Why," said Scott, "you—"

"Quiet," barked the Martian, "or you'll be gagged as well as bound." To the girl he said, smiling: "You're well aware that you arrived here under highly-suspicious circumstances, and that every precaution had to be taken. Unfortunately, for many reasons, World Government chose to send over an irksome bombardment at a time that couldn't have been better chosen to disrupt some of our plans, and to hinder our normal interrogation methods. As for my status, unless you are more stupid than I believe you to be, you are well aware that you're talking to one of the best-qualified men in the Citizens' Army on the subject of weapons, new or old."

"Then why can't we do business?" asked the girl. "Why this cat-and-mouse game? It's almost disillusioning to go through so much for something you believe in, and then to have your supposed brothers treat you like a half-wit or a spy."

"No one has accused you of being a World Government spy, my hot-tempered lady. Our counter-intelligence personnel have checked that. At worst, you're an overzealous reporter who'll go to any lengths to score a beat in that silly little game of newsgathering. But we've talked enough." The Martian consulted an instrument on his wrist. "It's time to go."

"Where?" asked Kathy.

"You'll see." The Martian untied Scott, then stepped back and covered him while he untangled himself from the cord. "Through the door, both of you. Not that one—this one." He thrust aside a drape. "Kathy first, then Scott—whose first or last name I still don't know—and then me. Remember

I have the guns now, both of you."

THEY FOUND themselves in a well-lighted tunnel. It sloped down, leveled off for a distance, then inclined upward. There was another door at the end of it. Beyond was the darkness of the black fog, pressing against the round window at eye level.

"Before we go out, we'll just tie the two of you together," said the Martian. "Don't want you getting lost."

At Joro's order, Kathy opened the door and the three of them stepped out into the blackness. "I'll give you directions," he said. "For now, go straight ahead." Then, in a voice that carried only to Scott's ears, he said: "For the sake of all of us, don't try anything—Warren."

So the Martian *did* know his full name. Scott Warren didn't know what it meant, but he decided he'd had a lifetime's share of heroics—especially now with a Q-gun in his back. He stumbled along, following Kathy's tugs on the cord, with the Martian's hand on his shoulder.

"Stop," said Joro. Scott turned his head and saw a faint glow rising to head level. Apparently the Martian was consulting a defogger. The bombardment stopped suddenly. "Turn left, at a ninety-degree angle," Joro ordered. There was a tug on Scott's wrist again and he followed the girl off to the left through the blackness.

"Ow," said Kathy, after a while.

"Good," said the Martian. "Did you bump into something?"

"Yes, damn you."

"Just stand still." He moved past them, still grasping Scott's shoulder. "This is it," said Joro. There was a sound of metal on metal. "Now if you'll move toward me, you'll find steps. Climb them."

Scott sensed Kathy making her way up them, and followed. They reached the top of a short flight and moved

forward at the Martian's command. There was the metallic sound again—and then they could see.

"We're in an air-car," said Scott.

"Exactly," said Joro. "In three minutes we should be able to take off. Get up forward, the two of you."

The control cabin was forward. Joro waved them to seats at the side and sat in the pilot's chair. As they sat, the fog began to disperse. It turned from black to gray and, as the last tendrils snaked into nothingness, Joro threw the engines into life and sent the car up into a screaming climb. He set the coordinates and relaxed.

"Cigaret, Kathy—Warren? Might as well be comfortable en route." The girl looked at the Martian in surprise as he used Scott's last name.

"En route where?" asked Scott. He accepted a cigaret.

"To a place where spies are dealt with, my friend."

"You called him Warren," said Kathy, ignoring the cigaret Joro held out to her. "I didn't tell you his name."

"You're right," the Martian said. "But didn't you suppose we knew he was in the camp? We can stop the play-acting now, however. I happen to know of Scott Warren; he, at least, is no spy. I wish I knew as much about you, child."

"What do you mean?" the girl asked. "Where are we going? Where are spies dealt with?"

"At Iopa."

"Why," said Kathy, looking at Joro with widening eyes, "that's World Government headquarters."

"Precisely," said the Martian.

IT WAS A white and shaken Kathy Brand who, after four hours of top-drawer grilling by World Government Investigation, was escorted into the Galactic newsroom by Joro. Only he wasn't Joro, of course. That was a name the W. G. I. agent had used along

with a carefully-prepared background when he contrived to be drafted into the outlaw research lab. His real name was Bron.

He said to Scott: "Here's your girl; she's cleared. Not because we couldn't make a charge against her stick—we could—but because she's learned her lesson."

Scott tried to apologize tactfully—without being too rough on Kathy—for the female monkey-wrench that Galactic News had unwittingly tossed into the W. G. I. machinery, but Bron brushed that aside. "As a matter of fact," he said, "it all came out quite successfully. The chief says I can tell you there's going to be a big story for official release tomorrow. It's off the record till then—but, briefly, the outlaws' new secret-weapon isn't a secret any more."

Kathy looked mournfully from the Martian to Scott. "I'm a real hotshot reporter, I am. Have I still got a job, boss?"

Scott's words were cool, but his eyes were smiling. "Inasmuch," he said, "as the Iopa Women's Club is holding its annual election of officers today, and insofar as we need a paragraph on it for a special client who pays well for just such slush, you have an assignment."

"It'll be the best paragraph you ever saw, Scott. Maybe in time you'll let me work my way up to something real important, like a hot case at the small-claims court."

"Our job," said Scott—

"Don't say it," Kathy interrupted him. "I know. Our job is to report the news, not to make it. Believe me, little Kathy's a smarter girl."

She went out.

Scott started to get up—but then he saw the desk man grinning at him. It must have been all of five minutes before he rose, casually, and then hurried off in the direction Kathy had gone.



Readin' and Writin'

UBERWINDUNG VON RAUM UND ZEIT, herausgegeben von Gotthard Gunther. Karl Rauch Verlag, Dusseldorf und Bad Salz, 1952; 237 p., unschassbar.

Dieser Buch—no, the hell with that—this book contains seven magazine science-fiction stories by American writers. The list follows:

"Desertion," by Clifford D. Simak

"Nightfall," by Isaac Asimov

"Who Goes There?" by John W. Campbell, Jr.

"The Lotus Eaters," by Stanley C. Weinbaum

"Time and Time Again," by H. Beam Piper

"The Monster," by A. E. van Vogt

"Mimsy Were the Borogoves," by Lewis Padgett

The selections, as you can see, are excellent; even the van Vogt is the product of one of those rare occasions when the old master managed to be entertaining and make sense.

Perhaps a more interesting consideration, for American readers, is the effect upon these stories of translation into the odd German language. I have spent some time on this question, and have looked into it thoroughly; and I believe no serious student will contradict me when I say that, on the whole, the German text represents an enormous improvement over the English.

Take, for example, the well-known first sentence of Campbell's "Wer Da?": "The place stank."

This is a short, skinny, pallid sentence; it understates; it is half ashamed of itself. But see what a robust, impressive, nose-filling thing it becomes in the German: "Der Raum war voller Gestank."

Even when our English-speaking writer

is doing his best, as in Padgett's: "S-s-s-spit!" Emma shrieked, overcome by a sudden fit of badness. "Spit!"

—the Teuton can better him without even breathing hard: "Ssspucke!" schrie Emma in einem plotzlichen Anfall von Ungezogenheit. "Spucke."

To be sure, there are inevitable difficulties, rifts between the English and the German Weltanschauungen; for example when a recently-revived corpse in "Wiedererweckung" mentions pink elephants, there is little to be done; the German, even with delirium tremens, never sees pink elephants; he sees white mice. And in "Die Lotussesser," although Oscar comes off fairly well with "To me I am a man to you," the whole thing breaks up in utter confusion when Ham is supposed to feed Oscar the word he needs by saying, "There's a chance that there is no word!" In German, "there's a chance" is *moglicherweise*, and "the law of chance" is *das Gesetz der Wahrscheinlichkeit*, and that is that.

The most serious deficiency in the German language is of course its entire lack of nonsense words; thus Padgett's glossatech is firmly pinned down as *Schrank*, which means cupboard; and whereas a French translation of "Jabberwocky" is enough to drive you out of your mind, the German is merely rather sad. The stanza which appears in the Padgett story, retranslated, goes roughly like this:

*'Twas dampish, and the slippery stones
Slid tossing in the web;
Miserable were the burgherlegs
And whoever could not go must stay.*

Gunther identifies the source of these lines, in his *Kommentar* at the end of the

volume, as a Kinderbuch; quotes them in the English, and remarks: Do you understand this? Naturally not; but rest assured, the Editor does not understand it, either.

This is a great pity in more ways than one—it means, for one thing, that Algis Budrys' delightful "The Weebies" will never penetrate the language-barrier; and, more generally, I assume it means that none of these stories, however capable the translations, will have quite the effect upon German audiences which the writer had in mind. In his determinedly didactic commentary, Gunther explains "Mimsy Were the Borogoves" as a companion-piece to an anecdote about Shelley; I'm reasonably sure this will come as a great surprise to Kuttner. The Kuttner Syndrome, incidentally, can now be considered to be an international phenomenon: under "Über die Autoren dieses Buches" appears a note beginning as follows: Lewis Padgett: Pseudonym für Henry Kuttner (anderes Pseudonym: Jack Vance)...

Gunther also takes the view that American science fiction is some sort of mystical forerunner of a new Metaphysik; this seems equally dubious to me, but now that the tales are being translated into German, I suppose, anything can happen.

FUTURE TENSE, edited by Kendall Foster Crossen. Greenberg, 364 pp., \$3.50.

Ken Crossen, who writes the most primitive sort of slapstick humor and the most sober and acute criticism, has here assembled 14 stories which I would assess as six excellent, five passable and three stinkers; a high score, especially considering that the best of the lot is something like 30,000 words long.

He has also provided a forthright and enormously-intelligent introduction, which ought to be required reading in every editorial and publishing office, bar girlie-magazines and scratch-sheets. I wish I could reproduce all of it here.

Crossen marshals what looks to me like an unassailable argument against the notion that science-fiction is, or ought to be, nothing but "pure entertainment"; he takes the opposing view that (a) it's impossible to write anything without saying something, and that (b) writers are responsible for what they do say. I heartily concur. I have two cavils, however—not against the position itself but against Crossen's and others' interpretation of it. I think that overconsciousness of the author's responsibility to declare himself about his own society often leads directly to one of the most crippling constrictions of modern science fiction: a too-literal translation of today to tomorrow. Disguised essays in which the Martians are clearly Negroes in greenface, for example, are neither good moralizing nor good fiction; the author can

have nothing convincing to say to us about racial hatred until he makes his Martians Martians. Secondly, to aim more directly at this book, I get the impression from Crossen's story-blurbs that he has the human failing of being less interested in sincerity and responsibility than in opinions which agree with his own.

The stories in this collection are divided into two groups: "On the record", previously published in magazines, and "Off the record", new stories. The latter section is introduced with delightful frankness: "Some of (these stories) were especially written for 'Future Tense', while others failed to please magazine editors for one reason or another."

Here is the list, with comments: "Plagiarist," by Peter Phillips: a long dream-slow look at a rebel in a future world which has abolished poetry, by the talented author of "Dreams Are Sacred." This is a sort of bonus in the "On the record" section; it has been published in a British magazine, but never before in this country.

"The Ambassadors," by Anthony Boucher: a pleasant spoof on the subject of werewolves and their opposites, werepeople.

"Dream's End," by Henry Kuttner: a good sample, not the best, of the Kuttner's late-forties preoccupation with insanity.

"We the People," by Ward Moore (author of 1947's dreadfully vulgar "Greener Than You Think"), whom Crossen calls, I think erroneously, one of the two "finest writers in science fiction today": a deadly-dull would-be-humorous imaginary presidential election, about three-quarters redeemed by a lovely snapper.

"Throwback," by Miriam Allen deFord: an unconvincing future-world in which everybody—except the atavistic heroine—looks with horror on unregulated childbirth. I thought we were all through with this monolithic nonsense 20 years ago, but it has been popping up again recently. (And will somebody please tell me why the hell it is that whenever we get one of these stories about the future housewife, written by a woman, the husband is *always* named Jon without the h?)

"Things of Distinction," by Kendall Foster Crossen: this is one of about ten or twelve novelettes Crossen has written for the Mines magazines; they are all exactly alike; they are, as I remarked earlier, primitive slapstick, and they're prime examples of the too-literal translation I complain of. Nevertheless, hating myself, I've read every one with enjoyment. Incidentally, Crossen defends himself in the blurb for printing this one; this isn't a point I feel violently about, but I do think anthropologists ought to disqualify their own work, if only on the theory that they're supposed to exercise unbiased judgment.

"Scarlet Dream," by C. L. Moore: a

period piece, a Northwest Smith story from the 1934 *Weird Tales*—written, if I am right, some years before Miss Moore became Mrs. Henry Kuttner. Then as now, her prose artistry was matchless, and this is a moving and very impressive thing, faintly redolent of bat's blood and lavender, but living still.

"Cyclops," by H. F. Heard: more of Heard's playful garrulousness, almost too perfectly artless. This is a fine specimen, though, very nearly as good as his classic "Wingless Victory," and hung on much the same sort of narrative peg. Here, instead of intelligent auks, his subject is a race of one-eyed, single-footed monstrosities which, believe it or not, he manages to make perfectly believable as evolution's coming improvement on the genus *homo*.

"The Battle of the S...s," by Bruce Elliott: slight and trite.

"The Island of Five Colors," by Martin Gardner: a fascinating bit of topological nonsense by the author of "No-Sided Professor."

"Baby Killers," by Rose Bedrick Elliott: Ray Bradbury's "And Then—the Silence" and "Here There Be Tygers," and even less pointed than the latter.

"Incubation," by John D. MacDonald: illustrates my point; as the blurb makes clear, it's sound thinking from Crossen's point of view (and mine), but it's a mediocre story—so sound that it's perfectly familiar.

"Love Story," by Christopher Monig: at first and second glance this looks like a rather unpleasant dirty joke; actually, I think it's a crushing commentary on the evil we do by misinforming and failing to inform our children.

"Beanstalk," by James Blish: the 30,000-worder, which I've saved for last out of its proper order. This is the tetraploid story Blish told me he was planning to write—it must be five or six years ago. Here it is, and worth waiting for; worth the price of the book, too; I think it's the best piece of writing Blish has done yet.

Blish, incidentally, is an intense young man with a brilliant scholastic mind and an astonishing variety of enthusiasms—e. g. music, beer, astronomy, poetry, philosophy, cats. He plays two instruments, composes, writes poetry and criticism for the little magazines, is a genuine authority on James Joyce and Ezra Pound, and an expert in half a dozen other fields. In college he was well on his way to becoming a limnobiologist when he discovered that he was getting more A's in English literature—and selling the stories he submitted to such magazines as *Future Fiction*, *Cosmic Stories* and *Super Science Stories*.

One man is obviously not enough for all this, and there are really two Blishes: one an alertly-interested, warmly outgoing human being; the other a cold, waspishly precise scholast. Up till now, in his prose-

work at least, I think the two have almost always got in each other's way: Blish's early stories are almost oppressively devoid of any human color or feeling; they might be stories written about human beings by an exceptionally able Martian anthropologist.

"Beanstalk" is different. Sam, Sena, Dr. Fred—and in particular Maury St. George, the most fascinating science-fictional villain since Blacky DuQuesne—all the major characters are as big and as round as life; bigger, I suppose I should say, since all of them but Dr. Fred are polyploid giants. They are, if you like, supermen and women (and one dog, a bitch named Decibelle)—they're taller, stronger, longer-lived than their cousins with the normal human number of genes—but their story is a story of recognizable, believable people; there is a really fantastic body of technique in this short novel, but unless you are looking for it you will never notice it; it's submerged, where it belongs.

If a superman really is a superman, he ought to be able to neutralize the natural hostility of normal men enough to get along; this is the point made by Kuttner in the Baldy series and neglected by everyone else, from Stapledon to Van Vogt, until now. Like Kuttner, Blish makes paranoia the Titans' greatest hazard: take a world in which there has already been much anti-Titan legislation and one anti-Titan pogrom, add a paranoid Titan who equates "superman" with "master race"; the result is explosive, and this is only the beginning. I am not going to tell much more about the plot, or Blish will say "supererogation" to me again; but I am going to say a great deal about the structure that underlies it and is interwoven with it.

Not merely embedded in "Beanstalk," but inseparably united to make one coherent and symmetrical narrative, are whole exemplars or recognizable fragments of the following: a sports story; a murder story; a love story; a Western story—plus, for good measure, a couple of panels from "Buck Rogers."

Since the last thing I want is to scare anyone away from this work, I'd better repeat that this ridiculously-difficult technical feat takes place entirely in the submerged levels of the story. Wildly-incompatible as the above-listed elements are, not one has been dragged in by the hair; every one has been almost unrecognizably altered by the author's inventiveness; every one is essential. The sports fragment is a jet-powered, gimmicked-up Titan football game, necessary to pave the way for the Buck Rogers element, which is itself (a) indispensable and (b) brilliantly rationalized, down to the last silly flange on the flying-belt-borne superman's helmet.

One of Blish's most engaging traits is this habit he has of examining the most

moth-eaten and idiotic kind of plot with an interested expression, like an open-minded watchmaker inspecting a Rube Goldberg, and then carefully rearranging it so that, by hook or crook, it actually makes sense. For example, we have here Villain kidnapping Heroine, and Hero charging off through black forest to the lonely mountain cabin where she is pent, guided by Faithful Dog.

This is pure nonsense from beginning to end, as nobody realizes better than Blish; so he has given the villain an odd but perfectly sensible reason (which, pardon me, I am not going to reveal) for snatching the girl, and he has made the dog a mutated specimen with more intelligence than a chimpanzee.

I haven't finished yet. I'll say once more, just to make it perfectly clear, that all these unlikely patchwork pieces have been totally absorbed; not a scrap is still Western, or murder, or love story; it's all science fiction.

As if this were not incredible enough, Blish has proceeded to make the science fiction itself a synthesis of nearly every major period in the history of the literature, from gadgeteering to sociological, and to match the masters of each on their own grounds; and again there are no seams; the whole is one.

Blish's prose style has always been precise, flexible and eloquent, but in nearly all his earlier work I've found it somewhat harsh and edgy as well. In "Beanstalk," by contrast, the writing is enormously effective—rapier-sharp in the dialogue, smooth as silk elsewhere, and with a poetic intensity which, oddly, I've seldom found in Blish's work before:

For Sena, who was not yet forty, the whole small world was in the throes of an endless springtide; a youth that would last more than a century, with toy bridges and houses and roadplanes clustered at her feet, and more than time enough to learn everything one needed to know, and the high-browed, god-like figures of lovers striding through the narrow streets of diploid man...

The world waited, flooded with delicate greenness that would never die.

Blish's love of words for their own sake and his prankish humor still lead him to what I think are occasional excesses. At the end of "Beanstalk," when the villain's cabin collapses and slides down into the valley, Blish describes the event in a long Joycean catalogue, as inappropriate as it is unexpected; but if this is a fault it's a minor one, more than counterbalanced by a thousand felicities like this one, from the same part of the story:

Sam moved one hand. The hillside,

the ledges of the valley, the hillocks, the grasses uttered giants; they stood everywhere, motionless, like the dragon's-teeth soldiers of Cadmus.

Plateaus of learning, commonly noticed in the early training of children, seem to occur in later ages and other fields as well; I was in one myself, as a writer, for ten years, and I like to suppose that I am in another now. If Jim Blish has just leaped to a new plateau—meaning that this story is not a brilliant exception but the starting-point for another slow, steady advance—I suggest that the incumbent Mr. Science Fiction get ready to move over.

—Damon Knight

THE GOLDEN APPLES OF THE SUN
by Ray Bradbury. (Doubleday: \$3)
In 1862-63 Henry Adams, in writing to a friend, said: "The truth is everything in this universe has its regular waves and tides. Electricity, sound, the wind, and I believe every part of organic nature will be brought some day within this law. But my philosophy teaches me...that the laws which govern animated beings will be ultimately found to be at bottom the same with those which rule inanimate nature, and...I am quite ready to receive with pleasure any basis for a systematic conception of it all."

In that same period, he wrote to another friend: "Man has mounted science and is now run away with. I firmly believe that before many centuries more, science will be the master of man. The engines he will have invented will be beyond his strength to control. Some day science may have the existence of mankind in its power, and the human race commit suicide by blowing up the world."

The first statement might well have been the philosophy of Hugo Gernsback in fathering science-fiction as a specific genre, and of the mainstream of science-fiction up to today. And the second statement might be a summation of Ray Bradbury's place, and of his reason for being, in science-fiction. While others have written, *ad nauseum*, of man's doom, Bradbury has consistently been the voice of the poet raised against the mechanization of mankind. Others have prophesied man's doom, but theirs have been the intellectual approach, pointing out that certain actions are illogical because they may lead to destruction. Bradbury has protested with his heart and his passions and hang the logic. To him, there has been only a difference of degree between man dropping the atom bomb and man tossing beer-cans into Martian canals. One destroys the whole man; the other indicates that the inner man is already destroyed.

Discounting such writers as Aldous Huxley, George Orwell and Ward Moore, who have made excursions into the genre rather than being a product of it, science

fiction has been rich in ideas but the writing has been poor indeed. It has tended to be mechanistic in style and, too often, totalitarian in philosophy. It has fed on the admiration of a small select circle, maintaining until recently a Vanderbiltian attitude of to-hell-with-the-public. The very make-up of the audience, editors, and writers—an incestuous, professional daisy-chain—was one which, I suspect, scared away the writers who might have changed it. Lately a new breed of writers has been creeping into science fiction so the picture may change in the future; but as of the moment Ray Bradbury is the one and only writer of literary stature produced by science fiction.

To some degree, this judgment is anticipatory. At this stage there are many faults to be found in Bradbury's writing; his faults are, in fact, exceeded only by his virtues. While much of his strength comes from his simplicity, he is at times too simple and one-tracked. He experiments variously with stories, like most writers; but unlike them, all the versions are usually published and republished. This is sound economic procedure, but unsound literary practice since it often tends to make him repeat himself overmuch.

Like his literary ancestors, de Maupassant and Poe, he is too often motivated by hatred. (A good force in the satirist, this love-turned-to-hatred, but apt to be crippling in the poet.) This hatred is not always all-embracing; quite often he has a deep love for the simple man; other times, however, his hatred of the "modern" man and all his works overflows the banks sweeping everything along with it.

"The Golden Apples of the Sun" is Ray Bradbury's fourth volume of short stories. It is not his best collection, but it is good enough to compare favorably with the best short stories being published today. The contents range from science-fiction (strictly Bradbury-type science-fiction) through fantasy to what might be called straight fiction. At their worst they are better than competent stories; at their best they are sheer poetry.

Each reader will find his own favorite story or stories in the volume. I find it hard to choose among the best of ten or twelve, but I think I like best "The Great Wide World Over There", the story of a woman whose life focuses around the fact that she has never received any mail, and "Sun and Shadow", the story of a Mexican who resents being treated as a part of a quaint scenery. Perhaps, to some degree, my choice of these two is influenced by the feeling that it is high time Bradbury moved away from fantasy and science-fiction.

I like least the Chinese stories. I think
[Turn To Page 63]



**She chase perversity and
man-hating as her syndrome!**

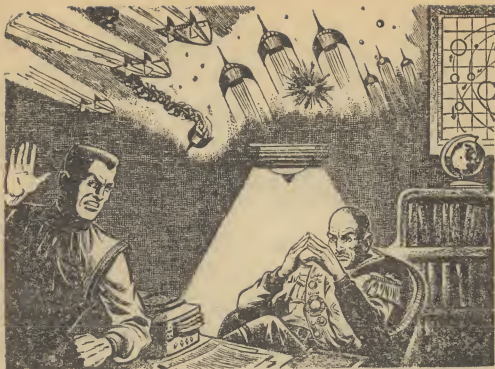
*Don't miss this compelling novelet
of a world where everyone was a
neurotic — by law — and everyone
changed his neurosis four times a
year!*

THE IRRATIONALS

by Milton Lesser

*it leads off the
November issue of*

**SCIENCE
FICTION
QUARTERLY**



"Now . . . let's not be hasty," said Premier MacIntosh.

It's easy to say things would be different if you could get into the driver's seat. But sometimes you don't understand why matters ought to be just as they are, until you've gotten into the position where you can change them. Then, of course, you'll find you have to let down everyone who supported you, and believed you'd make the great change . . .

Counter - Irritant

by Gordon R. Dickson

(illustrated by Milton Luros)

PREMIER Joseph MacIntosh leaned back in his swivel-chair, put the tips of his fingers together in front of his nose, and gazed over them with grave disapproval at the stocky young man on the other side of his official desk.

"Now, let's not be hasty," said MacIntosh.

The young man exploded.

"Hasty!" he bellowed. "After fifty

years of wishy-washy shilly-shallying milk-and-water appeasement I ask for a little action, and you tell me not to be hasty!" He choked with anger.

"Hasty!" he repeated furiously, pounding the fragile, mirror-like surface of the Premier's desk.

"Yes, Mr. Van Brock," said the Premier firmly, "hasty. It's not a light matter to plunge the Solar System and its colonies into a probably-disasterous

war. My policy, and the policy of this government will be, as always, to keep the peace."

"Government policy!" snorted Van Brock. "Poly—Sci partyline policy, you mean."

The Premier looked at him steadily. "Mr. Van Brock," he said. "You're a young representative to the lower house of the United Worlds Government, and a new representative. For that reason you're allowed occasional breaches of decorum that would not be pardoned in an older office-holder. But it might be a good idea to remember that is all you are; and that I am the executive head of this Government. The decision in these cases is mine."

Van Brock leaned forward, gripping the edge of the Premier's desk with both hands. All the tremendous vitality of his personality was concentrated in this one unconscious gesture.

"*But don't you understand, sir!*" he cried. "Vega's the one big rival we have! She's as strong as we are, and growing stronger." He swung away from the desk and strode over to the three-dimensional star map on the wall.

"Look," he said, extending a finger. "Here's Vega, 26.5 light years away—three months by overdrive. Here's Arcturus, five months away. And here's Altair, only two months away. Where do most of those complaints on your desk come from? Altair. The Vegans are stepping on the toes of our colonists on every inhabitable system we've discovered so far. But if they can get the upper hand on Altair, they'll be practically squatting on our doorstep."

"Don't you think, Mr. Van Brock," said the Premier with just a touch of sarcasm, "that Altarian barbarians would have some objection to Vegan domination?"

"What could they do?" retorted Van Brock. "Even with our help, the

barbarian races on Altair are behind the Arcturians. And the Arcturians are just on the threshold of civilization. Both of them are too unhuman to help or hinder. But the Vegans are our natural enemies. They're humanoid; they're intelligent and civilized. We quit too soon in the last war with them; we should have gone on and crushed them entirely."

MacIntosh looked at him. "You weren't alive fifty years ago," he said. "That war was a stalemate. It would have ended by exhausting Earth and Vega races together."

"That's an opinion only."

"It was my opinion," said the Premier, "at the time we signed the peace, and now. You're a chauvinist through ignorance Mr. Van Brock; and I don't intend to see Humanity stretched on the rack of another war simply to educate you."

Van Brock's mouth twisted bitterly. "Don't you see," he said, "that this ostrich-like policy of deliberately ignoring friction between our colonials and Vegan traders, and exploiters on the barbarian worlds, is leading inevitably to this very war you're so frightened of?"

"I do not."

Van Brock sighed heavily. "You force me to take the whole matter to the public," he said.

MacIntosh stood up behind his desk. He stood very straight, in spite of his hundred and fifteen years, and his eyes met Van Brock's on the level at last. "I was put in office, with the rest of the Political Science Party half a century ago, to keep the peace," he said. "And as long as I'm Premier it will be kept. If you want action on Vega, you'll have to get me out."

"All right, then," said Van Brock. "I will."

The Premier smiled a bleak smile. "And when you've tried that and failed..."

"I won't," said Van Brock.

"...Come back, and have another talk with me."

Van Brock looked at him in some surprise; then shrugged his shoulders, turning away toward the door. "Why not?" he said. "But, as I say, I won't fail." And with that he left the office.

ON THE STEPS of Government Head House a thin, wiry-haired little man waited. As Van Brock came out this individual fell into step beside him.

"Well?" the individual asked.

"No luck, Harry," Van Brock answered glumly. "He's honest enough, and human enough, but he's getting old and short-sighted. When he refused to do anything, I threatened to take the whole matter to the public. He challenged me. Said I'd have to get him out of office if I wanted action."

Harry whistled. "That's a stopper," he said.

"Why?" asked Van Brock. "I think I can do it."

"What!" Harry grabbed Van Brock by the arm, swinging him around so that the two men stood halted, facing each other. "Why, you don't have a chance! The Political Science Party has polled a clear majority on every major issue for fifty years, and they'll back MacIntosh to the limit. It's political suicide for a freshman representative like yourself."

Van Brock looked at him a trifle oddly. "I'm not doing this for myself," he said harshly. "It seems to me that the lives of a few billion people are more important than my political career."

"If you could do anything for them," said Harry. "If these conclusions you've drawn about Vega are true. If. If. Come down to earth, Van. I've been a representative's press-agent around Government Center here for nearly three quarters of a century, and I know what I'm talking about. All you'll get out of this will be six month's

hard work tying a noose around your own neck."

"And yours, too—is that it?" asked Van Brock bitterly. He gave a short, unhappy laugh. "I don't blame you, Harry. I must be pretty short on persuasion if I can't convince even my own press-agent that there's real danger. Well, I can't get started on this for a couple of weeks at least. I'll help you find another job in that time."

He turned on his heel and walked away.

"Damn fool," said Harry, looking after him.

Van Brock continued to stride off. Suddenly the little man broke into a trot in pursuit.

"Hey, Van," he called. "Slow up. Wait for me."

TWO WEEKS later, the first of Van Brock's broadcasts was aired. There was no advance publicity, but rumor had already spread its reports; a good percentage of those owning reception-boxes on the Three Worlds of Earth, Venus, and Mars, and the colonies listened.

In a billion boxes, then, light swirled, eddied, and coalesced into the thick-shouldered, tri-dimensional image of Van Brock. And his voice came, deep and vibrant, challengingly, to all of them.

"Citizens of the Three Worlds," he said, "men and women of the human race, *we have been betrayed!*"

And, in the office of Premier MacIntosh, a small handful of men listened; middle-aged men; the old guard of the Political Science Party; those who had been present at its victory.

"Young hothead!" grumbled Al Peters, of Extra-Terrestrial Trade Office.

"But dangerous," said another, turning to the Premier. "Don't you think so, Mac?"

Premier MacIntosh, sitting on a couch facing the three-dimensional image in the office reception box and sipping a before-dinner cocktail, looked up at his questioner.

"There's always danger in politics, Joe," he answered. "And Humanity knows we ought to be used to it by now. But I think, in this case, the odds are on our side."

Joe Hennesy, Premier's Aide-de-Camp shrugged, and turned back to the box, from which Van Brock's image was now pouring words in a fiery stream.

"We have been asleep! We have let ourselves be cozened by old men into paying too high a price for peace. We have slumbered in a false security while men in our far-flung colonies in other systems, and on the barbarian worlds, spoke softly and turned the other cheek to Vegan aliens. Men and women alike, of our kind, have bowed down to alien authority; men and women, such as you and I, who call ourselves free and equal to any intelligence in this wide universe.

"And shall I tell you why they have bowed down? Not, fellow humans, because it is their nature to do so. Not because they are naturally servile. Not because they fear the Vegan alien. No, there is another, more shameful reason.

"It is the law!"

"Yes, it is the law. Our own human law, set up by a bunch of old men whose only policy is—so they say—to keep the peace. But whose peace is this they are keeping? Not the peace of our colonists, who suffer almost constant friction with the Vegans. Not the peace of your children, who—if this goes on—will have to fight Vegan warriors. None of these.

"Men and women of Humanity, I say to you, tonight, from this broadcasting booth in Government Center, that it is *their* peace, and *their* peace alone, that these old men, these politi-

cal veterans of the Political Science Party, are concerned with. It is the political peace of fifty years following the termination of our last war with Vega that concerns them.

"It is that peace I have broken for you, tonight."

"Whew!" said Joe Hennesy, turning from the reception box. "He's hitting us where it hurts, all right. We can't deny our own watchword. 'To keep the Peace' was the slogan that put us up in office in the first place." He turned for encouragement to the Premier sitting on the couch, who smiled back at him with quiet confidence.

"Take it easy, Joe," said MacIntosh. "We knew somebody like this was bound to come along, sooner or later. He'll whip up a storm all right. But the real test will come when he takes the matter to the Assembly; then we can begin to fight back."

And he smiled again. But he smiled less easily the next day, when liberal newspapers began to clamor for his head.

Van Brock's series of broadcasts went on. He reviewed history for the audience that listened to him. He showed that the forces of Humanity had been holding their own at the time the last peace treaty with Vegas was signed. He accused the Political Science Party of taking advantage of a war-weary people to gain office. He charged them with attempting to make cowards out of the human race at the present time, in an effort to hold that office. And he reported incident after incident of Vegan-Human friction in the colonies of the barbarian worlds in the Altairian and Centaurian systems.

"You have heard the facts," he repeated constantly to his listeners. "What do you say to them?"

And, in an ever-increasing volume, in newspapers, in messages to their representatives, they responded that he

was right, that the Poly-Scis were wrong, that something must be done.

AFTER SOME three months of this, a tired MacIntosh said, "Well, Joe, how are things lining up in the Assembly?"

Joe Hennesy winced. "Oh, we've still got our majority in both the upper and lower houses. But I'm afraid it's going to evaporate, the minute Van Brock calls for a vote of confidence in you from the representatives. Once public attention is focused on the houses, it's every man for himself; a lot of our like-warm members are going to desert to save their own hides."

MacIntosh looked out a window and drummed with his fingers on the top of the desk in front of him. "I didn't expect such a reaction," he murmured, half to himself. "I really didn't."

"It's this younger generation that Van Brock belongs to," said Hennesy. "They're too young to remember the last war, and this talk about old men in office has got them excited."

"And the trouble is," said MacIntosh grimly, "he's right; we *are* old men. But we've got a tiger by the tail and can't let go."

For a minute there was silence in the office. Then Hennesy spoke up again. "Well, chief," he said, finally. "Shall we play it dirty?"

MacIntosh sighed. "I guess we'll have to, Joe," he said. "Fair means or foul, we've got to win; get in touch with Lyt Marja."

Five months to the day from his challenge to MacIntosh, Van Brock received a call from the Vegan Embassy at Government Center.

"Who's this?" he asked sharply.

The light in his communication-box swirled, and the scrawny figure of a Vegan, looking (as all Vegans do) like a half-starved caricature of a human, answered him in a deep bass voice.

"I am Lyt Marja, Mr. Van Brock."

"Well?"

"I think you might find it to your advantage to talk to me."

"Go ahead," said Van Brock.

"No," the Vegan demurred, "not over the public communications system; you must come and see me at the Embassy."

"Nothing doing," said Van Brock. "You boys would like an opportunity to put me out of the way. If you can't talk over the box, you come here."

"Be reasonable, Mr. Van Brock," answered Lyt Marja. "With public excitement at the pitch it is at now, it is somewhat unsafe for a Vegan to venture out. We have been stoned here at the Embassy, and our windows broken. Moreover, for me to visit you would be to announce the matter of our meeting publicly; the result could only be an accusation that our government was meddling in the internal politics of humanity. No, you must come to me—as secretly as possible."

"No thanks," said Van Brock; and broke the connection.

But, after he had ended the conversation, he sat for a while, thinking it over. He did not consider himself to be in ignorance of the motive behind the call. Either it was a bid for the cessation of hostilities being made by the administration, through the safest possible intermediary; or it was an attempt to bribe him off on the part of either the Poly-Sci Party, or the Vegans themselves. As for the personal danger involved in such a visit, both he and the Vegan knew that this was no more than an excuse. Van Brock was far too much in the public eye right now for violence to be a safe measure against him.

He hesitated a minute, biting his lip, wishing that Harry was there to talk the matter over with. Then, making up his mind, he flipped on his communications box and called Lyt Marja back.

"Tonight at ten hundred hours," he said. The Vegan nodded; and Van Brock broke the contact.

It was dark that night when Van Brock slipped up to the Vegan embassy in a car, rented under an assumed name, and rang the bell at the service entrance.

The door opened before him automatically. He entered and it closed behind him. Down a long dark hallway, he could see a door standing ajar and bright light flooding through the opening. He went down the hall.

The door proved to be the entrance to a room comfortably furnished in the human fashion. Cigarettes, and the materials for a drink awaited him. He ignored both and sat down in an armchair to wait.

It was quiet in the room. So quiet, in fact, that he was able to hear the almost noiseless sound of the door closing behind him. His tight nerves jerked him to his feet at the faint click of its latch sounded in his ears. In three swift strides he crossed the room and threw his weight against it.

It was securely locked.

HARRY TAYLOR, returning to the office that was their mutual headquarters, wanted Van Brock. He wanted Van Brock badly, the World Center grapevine had just informed him that a considerable segment of the younger Poly-Sci party group were ready to revolt and come over on Van Brock's side, if that gentleman would spearhead a movement for a general reelection. The little press-agent therefore, came bursting into the office with his news on his lips and was quite dumbfounded when he found no one to tell it to.

He glanced hurriedly at Van Brock's check-clock, which showed that the representative had passed out of its reception-area at roughly nine hundred and twenty hours. It was now almost twelve hundred hours. That meant that, according to the rigidly-artificial time of Government Center, which divided the normal twenty-four hours into two thousand units of the same designation,

Van Brock had been gone a good quarter of the evening and that it was well past midnight. Harry cursed. Why hadn't Van Brock left a message in plain sight on the automatic secretary? Then the obvious answer that Van might not have wanted his destination broadcast accured to Taylor; he looked anxiously around the room for some less-obvious clue to the representative's whereabouts.

There was little to look at. Government Center offices were fully automatic from dictagraph to disposal chute, and everything was in plain view. Helplessly he checked the blank tapes and blank document sheets in the dictagraph. They were completely unrewarding. He checked through the filed correspondence that had come in since nine hundred hours; and here also he drew a blank. Finally, his gaze fastened on the relief-image of Government Center on the office wall. If Van Brock was anywhere in the Center, his location would be represented on that map. And if he had meant Harry to know that location, Van Brock would have found some way of marking it unobtrusively.

Taylor stepped up and began to study the image minutely.

Daylight was beginning to show at the office windows when Taylor found what he wanted: The image of the Vegan Diplomatic House slightly distorted. Eagerly, his fingers probed the imaged building, seeming to disappear as they plunged into the little grey representation. They closed over something hard, and, as he withdrew it, the image snapped back into proper shape again, its reflecting surface being then clear.

The hard object was a tightly-folded pellet of document sheet. He unfolded it and read:

Harry: I'm to meet Lyt Marja for a talk at the Vegan Embassy at ten hundred hours tonight. Don't know about what. If I'm not back in two

hundred hours, call out the Marines.

Harry left the office at a dead run.

He broke more than one traffic regulation on the way to the embassy; and he wasted little time once he got there. Finding the main entrance locked, he tried the service entrance, as Van Brock had done, and was alarmed, rather than reassured, when it opened at his touch. He had taken the pellet-gun from his car holster, and he held it cautiously in front of him as he slipped down the dark corridor.

But there was no opposition waiting, and the door at the far end opened at a touch to reveal an exceedingly angry but unharmed Van Brock sitting in an arm chair. He sprang to his feet as Harry entered.

Harry grunted, midway between overwhelming relief and exasperation.

"What—" he began, but Van Brock cut him short.

"I don't know," he answered. "But let's get out of here fast." And he led the way at a run for Harry's car.

Once they were well away from the embassy, Harry shoved the pellet-gun back into its slot in the dashboard.

"What happened?" he demanded.

Van Brock shook his head and frowned.

"Nothing," he said. "Just exactly nothing. I can't understand it. Lyt Marja may have gotten cold feet at the last minute about telling me whatever it was he wanted to tell me. But then, why keep me locked up? And if I was to be locked up, why let me go when you came?"

"I don't get it either," said Harry. "Did you ever meet this Vegan before?"

"No," said Van Brock. "By the way, what do you know about him, Harry?"

Harry shrugged. "Nothing much. He's one of the older Vegan diplomats. If I remember rightly, he was even part of the peace-signing treaty group that came over here fifty years ago when we ended the war, and opened

diplomatic relations with his kind again. For all we know, he may have a lifetime position as ambassador to Government Center. I don't know much about the internal workings of Vegan politics."

"None of us do, blast it," said Van Brock gloomily. "That's another fault we can lay at Poly-Sci's doorstep. Oh, well. Whatever was planned for tonight evidently fell through. So I guess we can forget about it."

THE NEXT morning he woke to find Harry standing over his bed with a face expressive of the worst possible news.

"What's up?" asked Van Brock groggily.

"Everything," said Harry quietly. "Read that." He tossed a newsheet on to Van Brock's bed.

Sleepily, the big man sat up and focused his eyes on the headlines. "Van Brock In Secret Communication With Vegan Embassy," he read out loud. "What...?"

"No point in reading any farther," said Harry. "They've got the whole story of how you went secretly to the Vegan Embassy last night, and the amount of time you spent there. It's just newspaper-talk so far, but I got a call warning me that if you pressed the matter any further there'd be pictures produced and a charge of treason pressed against you."

Van Brock sat stunned. Harry's voice continued, hollow and distant in his ears. "Even if you want to fight the charge, you've already lost the big battle. People are frightened now, and I doubt if you could raise half a dozen votes in the Representatives House to back you after this. There's no alternative to defeat, only degrees of it. Either you give up now, and are simply through with politics; or you keep on going and have a virtually certain conviction of treason pressed against you. And that would mean the death-penalty."

"There's too many people backing me," said Van Brock, dazedly. "Nearly all of humanity is on my side in this question. The government wouldn't dare convict me, let alone execute me."

"Nobody is behind you," said Harry. "The people who listened to you, and agreed with you yesterday, distrust you today. They're afraid of you. They, themselves, would force your conviction and execution if it came to a treason-trial."

There was a long period of silence in the room; and then Harry spoke again. "The Premier wants to see you. He called and left a message you were to come to him immediately. It's an order."

In a dream of unreality, Van Brock got up and slipped into his clothes. Harry, watching him, said nothing. Then the representative headed for the door. He was reaching for the latch, when a thought struck him with all the cruelty of an open-handed slap in the face. He turned to look at Harry, who avoided his gaze.

"Harry!" said Van Brock. "You don't think I've been hooked up with the Vegans, do you?"

The accusation hung heavy in the room.

"I don't know," said Harry slowly, looking out a window. "I'm inclined to believe you myself; but all I know about what went on last night in the Embassy is what you told me. Then I remember the last war and—I don't know."

Van Brock took a deep breath and went out of the room.

IN THE Premier's office, MacIntosh awaited him. So did a thin Vegan, whom Van Brock recognized.

"Ah, Van Brock," said MacIntosh. "You've met Lyt Marja."

"Only over a reception-box," answered the young man grimly. "Thanks for the frame, Vegan."

Lyt Marja inclined his head. Mac-

Intosh's lips thinned disapprovingly. "Relax, Van Brock," he said. "What we did was necessary."

"Necessary to what?"

"Necessary to keeping the peace," returned MacIntosh.

Van Brock laughed bitterly. "Did you just get me here to gloat?" he asked. "Because, if so, I'm leaving, proctol or no proctol."

"Not at all," snapped MacIntosh. "You're attributing to us the same sort of childish reactions you're feeling yourself. I asked you here to find out whether you'd like to fill the office of Premier. My office, Van Brock."

The words were like a blow to the representative's solar-plexus. The breath went out of him with a whoosh and he sat down abruptly in a chair. Then he began to laugh a trifle crazily. "What next?" he asked weakly. "Premier?"

"Not right away, of course," said MacIntosh. "But in five or ten years—after this furor has died down and been forgotten. The Poly-Sci party heads have gotten together and decided that you seem to have the kind of qualities we need in the man holding this office. With the party solidly behind you, we can eventually shove you in. We're going to need a new man soon, you know." He smiled a trifle wryly. "You were right, unfortunately when you called us old men."

Van Brock had recovered from his momentary urge to hysteria. He looked straight at the Premier. "This is the most ridiculous thing I ever heard" he said coldly. "Don't you realize that the minute I was in, I'd turn your precious keep the peace policy upside down?"

"No you wouldn't," said MacIntosh.

"Why wouldn't I?" demanded Van Brock.

"Because," said MacIntosh with the suspicion of a smile at the corner's of his lips, "in the next five years we

should be able to teach you a little common sense."

"Common sense?" Van Brock reared up out of his chair. "What is this you're playing? Some kind of farce?"

"Nonsense," said MacIntosh swiftly. "The Poly-Sci Party has the best reason in the world for acting as it does, although only a handful of we old men at the top know what that reason is. Will you sit still and listen to it?"

"All right," said Van Brock flatly, reseating himself, "go ahead. It must be some whale of a good reason."

"It is," answered MacIntosh. "You came to me six months ago with evidence that the Vegans were moving in and competing with our colonies in the Altairian and Arcturian systems. That evidence was correct. I knew it was correct *because it is what the Poly-Sci Party has been working toward for fifty years*. Listen to a little history, Van Brock."

"The last war with Vega was a stale-mate, no matter what our earth histories tell you in your schoolbooks. When the Poly-Sci Party came to power, the war had been going on for forty years, draining the lifeblood of both races. And there was no hope of a solution. Vegans were an expanding, pioneering people; so were humans. The two civilizations were at roughly the same stage of development. Individuals of both races were similar, physically, mentally, and psychologically. We had too many points in common, people said; we were natural enemies.

"What only a few political science theorists recognized was that we were also natural allies.

"But these few intelligences were voices crying in the wilderness. Vegans were killing humans; humans were killing Vegans. It is a hopeless task to preach friendship with a murderer. So, instead, we formed a political party and threw our full weight into obtaining a peace that was little more than a truce, both sides tacitly



admitting it was only a breathing-spell to give them time to build up their strength.

"But, having gained a peace, we were determined to keep it."

"And," interjected Van Brock, "merely put off the reckoning until a more bloody day."

"No!" said MacIntosh. "Our job was to put off the reckoning until Vega should come to realize that their eventual well-being rested in a friendly alliance with humans. We set out to bring them to this realization—first by keeping the two races apart, in which we were aided by a few Vegans like Lyt Marja here, who is, himself, the equivalent of a Poly-Sci man on the Vegan worlds; and by supplying a counter-irritant."

"Counter-Irritant?" asked Van Brock.

MACINTOSH smiled. "The human race, in spite of a thousand years of contact with alien races is still unsophisticated in its emotional reaction to aliens. We tend to relate them to our own solar standards; we find it hard to take an alien at face value. Instead, we are likely to assume that because he looks like a teddy bear he must act like a teddy bear—or that because he lives like a mole, he thinks like a mole. In the case of a humanoid, we cannot relate him to an animal; therefore we tend to regard him as an inferior type of human, since a belief in our own superiority is firmly fixed in our minds.

"And the Vegan attitude is the same. Minor differences bulk large in our respective eyes, because we have not yet learned to take each other at face value. Only when races with greater differences begin to claim equality, will these minor differences lose their importance. To bring the Vegans, and even our own people to this realization, the Poly-Sci party has been working to keep the two people apart until pressure from the non-humanoid races on Arcturus and Altair can bring them together. And because the Poly-Sci party is infinitely more strong here on the human worlds than it is on the Vegan, we are the ones who are encouraging trespass by the Vegans on our colonial holdings.

"That's the story Van Brock. What do you think of it?"

There was a moment's silence.

"Why don't you tell this to the people?" asked Van Brock.

"With emotional reactions," answered the Premier, "it's not a matter of telling. Intelligences must be shown."

"Then why are you trying to tell me?"

"Because," said MacIntosh; and again there was the suspicion of a smile

at the corners of his mouth. "I think you're just inquisitive enough to go out to Arcturus or Altair and check for yourself on whether there's more common ground between Vegans and humans than there is between either and the barbarian races."

There was a long moment of silence in the Premier's office. Then... "I might do just that," said Van Brock, musingly. "I might indeed. But—" he raised his voice, looking up at both MacIntosh and Lyt Marja—"I warn you. No matter what happens to me as a result, if this story doesn't hold water, I'll spread it all over the galaxy among humans and Vegans."

"Agreed," said MacIntosh.



"Well?" demanded the young man.

Premier Rupert Van Brock leaned back in his swivel chair, put the tips of his fingers together in front of his nose, and gazed over them with grave disapproval.

"Now, let's not be hasty," said Premier Van Brock...



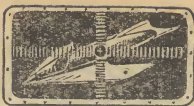
Remembered Words

The response to the contest in our March issue was quite gratifying, and the race was a close one, as your votes for the winners indicated.

As you may recall, the first prize was to be the original cover for our March issue, and this shall be sent to Robin LeRoy, whose alternate conclusion to Simak's "... And the Truth Shall Make You Free", was hailed as the best.

The second, third, and fourth-place winners get interior originals from our July issue. So: R. F. Knutson may have the original he selects (with the exception of the picture for "The Aeropause", which the author wanted); D. Mason should list two selections; and T. W. Camfield should list two alternate choices.

May I plead again for reasonably prompt action on the part of the winners.



INSIDE SCIENCE FICTION

A Department For The Science Fictionist

by Robert A. Madle

BECAUSE of the kind reception the readers of *Dynamic Science Fiction* have accorded this department, the editor decided to make it a monthly feature by publishing it in *Future Science Fiction*, as well as in *Dynamic*. We (the editor and author) appreciate the interest evidenced by your letters of comment, and sincerely hope to receive lots more of them. And we are definitely open for suggestions. What would *you* like to see discussed in future issues? Rest assured that all suggestions will be seriously considered. We might mention that, because of lack of space, the recollections section, "Twenty Years Ago In Science Fiction," is not included this month. It will appear in the January *Dynamic*, and in subsequent issues of both magazines thereafter.

THE FIRST SCIENCE FICTION CONVENTION

WHEN ONE thinks of a science fiction convention today, he visualizes a tremendous gathering of hundreds upon hundreds of fans, writers, editors, and artists, all convened in a large city's largest hotel, spending three grand and glorious days—having the time of their lives. 1952's convention in Chicago attracted well over one thousand, and 1953's gala affair is expected to exceed that figure. The conventions of today are intricate, business-like ventures, and require weeks and weeks of donated effort by the convention committee. It is universally agreed that the fine affairs which result, display the intensive preparation which precede the big shindigs; and the appreciation of the attendees is sufficient remuneration for those who sponsor the affairs.

This year's convention will be the 11th in the series of international affairs. One has been held every year beginning in 1939, excluding the war years of 1942-45. And every one has been great! And every one stems, indirectly, from a small meeting of science fiction fans, held in Philadelphia, seventeen years ago.

One day, early in October, 1936, members of the Philadelphia Science Fiction Society received letters from the International Scientific Association (the leading fan group of its day) informing them that they were descending *en masse* on Philadelphia and the PSFS. Sunday, October 22nd, arrived; and a contingent of Philadelphia fans (John V. Baltadonis, Milton A. Rothman, and Robert A. Madle) were at the train station bright and early to meet the ISA group, which consisted of Donald A. Wollheim, John B. Michel, William S. Sykora, Frederik Pohl, David A. Kyle, and Herbert Goudket. It is interesting to note that—with the exception of Goudket and Michel—all of the above-mentioned fans are still affiliated with the s-f field: Wollheim is an editor and author; Pohl a writer and agent; Kyle an editor and writer; et cetera.

This was the first inter-city fan-meeting of any significance, and the Philadelphia fans were thrilled as they toured the city with the leading fans of the day: Donald A. Wollheim was recognized as top fan at this time, and the other New Yorkers were also among the big names of the era. Principal topics of discussion were the ISA, the new *Thrilling Wonder Stories* and its effect on the Science Fiction League, fan magazines (the fanzine era was just beginning, and the PSFS had recently issued its initial effort, the hectographed *Fantasy Fiction Telegram*), Hugo Gerns-

back, Charles D. Hornig, H. P. Lovecraft, et cetera. At this stage the most interesting aspect of science fiction fandom was science fiction itself.

The small group of enthusiasts officially held a meeting at the home of Milt Rothman that afternoon and, at the suggestion of Wollheim, it was designated as the First Science Fiction Convention. It was further decided that this would be just the beginning—and a World Convention (to be held in conjunction with the World's Fair) was planned for July, 1939. Definite plans were formulated for a small conference to be held in New York in February, 1937. The group wanted to see what kind of an eastern gathering could be whipped up on short notice, and they further wanted to utilize it to start the World Convention machinery moving. Needless to say, the 1937 affair was held, as was the 1939 World Convention. And thus it can be seen how a small group of very youthful science fiction enthusiasts started a trend which, apparently, will continue *ad infinitum*.

SCIENCE FICTION SPOTLIGHT

NEW AND VIEWS: Local conferences now attract more attendees than did the early World Science Fiction Conventions! As Forrest J. Ackerman, Master of Ceremonies at the banquet of the 6th Annual Western Science Fiction Conference (held at Los Angeles, May 30-31) stated: "There are more fans here tonight than attended the entire First World Science Fiction Convention. I seem to remember that—back there in New York, in '39—there were just about 125 of us, including an obscure fan named Ray Bradbury, who is here with us this evening as the triumphant author of the world's first three-dimensional scientific film."

Highlights of the 1953 version of this annual West Coast affair were speeches by Bradbury and A. E. van Vogt; a discussion of scientific films by Tom Gries, producer of "Donovan's Brain"; a major speech by Gerald Heard, noted author and lecturer, "Is Science... Fiction?"; an author panel, consisting of Van Vogt, Bradbury, Mark Clifton, Chad Oliver, Richard Matheson, Floyd Wallace, E. Everett Evans, and Joseph Slotkin, answered audience queries; special films were shown by Ray Harryhausen (animator of "The Beast from Twenty Thousand Fathoms") and Morris Scott Dollens, among which was a portion of Dollens' "Dream of the Stars," to be released soon. R. S. Richardson projected a series of slides, as did cover-artist Mel Hunter. The old pro, E. Everett Evans, was Chairman, and the programming was arranged by Wendayne Ackerman.

Another big local conference was the 4th Midwest Conference, held May 16-17 at Indian Lake, Ohio. 135 fans, writers, and editors were on hand, including Arthur C.

Clarke, who presented an interesting slide talk. Among the prominent s-f personages who travelled to this out-of-the-way resort were Robert Bloch, Wilson (Bob) Tucker, Philip Farmer, Ed Emsh, Basil Wells, Frank Robinson, Jerry Bixby, and Larry Shaw, new editor of IF.

L. Sprague de Camp conducted a workshop on science-fiction and fantasy at the Philadelphia Regional Writers Conference, June 18 and 19. Joseph Shallit, who has been doing science-fiction lately, conducted the mystery story workshop, and Fletcher Pratt was one of the principal speakers.... de Camp and Pratt have just completed the "Harold Shea" sequel to "Wall of Serpents." Sprague has also put the finishing touches to a fact article, "Orthodoxy in Science".... Rog Phillips has turned inventor! He has patented a gadget described in his latest story, "Don't Be Twentieth Century." Hugo Gernsback: please note.... Kris Neville is hard at work doing a sequel to "Bettyann"... Tetsu Yano (Japanese s-f fan, now in USA to attend the 11th World S-F Convention) and Forrie Ackerman were photo-interviewed by *Scene*, Japanese-American slick magazine....

Arthur C. Clarke appears in a United Nations publication! In the current issue of *Impact of Science on Society*, Clarke predicts that rockets will be going to the moon and back by 1960, and that rockets carrying men to the moon will follow 10 to 20 years later. The article is titled, "The Challenge of the Spaceship".... Texas is busy planning its first statewide s-f conference.... Thanks to the New York Science Fiction Circle (and particularly to David A. Kyle) for selling memberships in the 11th World S-F Convention. The NY S-F Circle is interested in hearing from all local fans. Meetings are held bi-weekly, and many s-f celebrities are regular attendees. If interested, write David A. Kyle, 300 West 67th Street, New York 23, New York.

The Scientifilms: Jack Williamson's "The Humanoids" has been optioned for possible filming by Canterbury Productions.... The Ackerman Science Fiction Agency is closing a deal for Ivar Jorgenson (Paul W. Fairman) for the screening of his IF magazine story, "Deadly City." It will be retitled, "Lost City." Also, a film producer has approached the same agency to obtain an option on A. Merritt's immortal "Ship of Ishtar".... Fritz Lang was in Washington recently attempting to persuade the Alien Custodian's Office to release to him his 1929 scientific film, "The Girl in the Moon." Lang has spent a fortune trying to get this, the first feature film concerning a rocket flight to the moon, into the USA.

From the World of Books: "Trouble on Titan," by Alan E. Nourse, will be a Winston Spring release. Speaking of Nourse, watch this column for information concerning a new book company with which he

will be associated.... Groff Conklin's anthology, "Science Fiction Adventures in Dimension," is being recorded on Talking Book Records for the blind.... Among the 15 "new voices" to be represented in August Derleth's "Morning Stars" anthology will be Joe Slotkin with "Formula 97" and Chad Oliver with "Scientific Method".... "The Golden Apples of the Sun," Ray Bradbury's new collection, is rated among the top ten on the Los Angeles best seller list. The only other best seller to come out of the science fiction field was L. Ron Hubbard's "Dianetics".... Donald A. Wollheim, who edited the very first s-f pocket-book, "The Pocketbook of Science Fiction," will now edit a series for Ace Double Novels. Each will contain two novels, with the first scheduled for Fall release, featuring two short novels by A. E. van Vogt.... Lipincott has just released Groff and Lucy Conklin's anthology, "The Supernatural Reader".... A good bet at 35¢ is Gerald Heard's "Is Another World Watching," just out from Bantam Books. And Dell has published Clifford D. Simak's "Time and Again" under the title of "First He Died," in a 35¢ edition.

THE FANZINES

WITH "INSIDE Science Fiction" now appearing in both *Dynamic S-F* and *Future S-F*, making it a monthly department, we'll have more space hereafter to devote to fan publications. We shall not attempt actually to review the various fanzines, but will indicate what we consider worthwhile reading for the average science-fiction reader. Naturally, we can't cover the entire field at once: therefore, if certain publications aren't mentioned this time, perhaps they will be in the January *Dynamic*.

One of the most perfectly mimeographed magazines we have ever seen (and we've seen plenty) is issue #2 of ASFO (15¢ a copy from Jerry L. Burge, 415 Pavillion Street, S. E., Atlanta, Georgia). Cal Beck's commentary on the s-f field, "Nods and Becks," is of definite general interest as is Roger Dce's article, "It's Your Baby," which discusses the new type science fiction story—the one aimed at the general reader of fiction.

We cannot recommend too highly the fourth, and final, issue of Charles Freudenthal and Edward Wood's *Journal of Science Fiction* (50¢ from 1331 W. Newport Avenue, Chicago 13, Illinois). This issue

contains eighty photo-offset pages, including a complete s-f magazine index for 1952. (The index alone is worth the price asked.) There are eight pages of Chicon photos, plus an evaluation of Damon Knight's short-lived *Worlds Beyond* by David Ish, an appreciation of Richard Matheson by Robert Bloch, and other important articles of interest to the connoisseur.

James V. Taurasi has been publishing *Fantasy Times* for twelve years. It is a bi-weekly news sheet (10¢ a copy from 137-03 32nd Avenue, Flushing 54, New York) and Jimmy and his staff are usually there first with all of the news. If you want to keep informed of what's going on—by all means get your name on Taurasi's subscription list.

Another highly-recommended one is young Joel Nydahl's *Vega* (10¢ from 119 S. Front Street, Marquette, Michigan). There is a certain intangible atmosphere of fan-nish enthusiasm present in this monthly, 30-paged, well-mimed publication. It features biographies of top fans, historical background of the long-lived fan publications, and regular columns by Harlan Ellison and Marion Bradley. We might state that we do not agree with the discontinuation of Marian Cox's column, "The Ill Wind." We found it quite interesting and informative.

Among the top names represented in the current issue of Lyle Kessler's multi-lithed *Fan-Warp* are David H. Keller, Robert Bloch, Mari Wolf, and Alan E. Nourse. The latter's article on the possibilities of future medical research is quite thought-provoking. This one costs 20¢ from 2450 76th Avenue, Philadelphia, Pa., and is well worth it.

A magazine which reminds us of our own fan publications of many years ago is *Mote* (5¢ from Robert Peatrowsky, Box 634, Norfolk, Nebraska). The current (sixth) issue contains 28 hectographed pages and several entertaining features. "The Ether Coagulates," a takcuff on *Thrilling Wonder's* readers' department, is quite humorous. And Rich Lupoff discusses the borderline between science fiction and fantasy in a mature manner. Try *Mote*: what can you lose but a nickel?

We would appreciate receiving copies of all fan publications. Send them to: Robert A. Madle, 1366 East Columbia Avenue, Philadelphia 25, Pa. See you in *Dynamic*.



FINAL NOTICE: Soon after this issue of *Future Science Fiction* appears, the 11th World Science Fiction Convention will be held at the Hotel Bellevue Stratford, Philadelphia, Penna. Don't forget the dates: September 5, 6, & 7, 1953.

When Parkhurst heard the announcement that climaxed the science-fiction convention, he found that he'd been right, years ago when he had faith in science-fictionists' dreams. But, in another way, he'd been wrong . . .

COMEBACK

by Philip Latham



H. GAYLORD PARKHURST strolled across the lobby with an air of elaborate nonchalance, keeping his eyes carefully averted from the group at the entrance to the coffee-shop. He knew that Bill Conway was holding forth in the center of the group and he didn't particularly care for Bill Conway. Bill had been voted the guest of honor that year at the Pasadena Science Fiction Convention, better known as the Pasadelicon. Bill sold not only to the science-fiction magazines but to the big slicks as well—although just what the editors could see in his stuff Parkhurst had never been able to understand. But then editors were funny people.

"Hi, there, Parky!" Conway hailed him genially from his station by the

door. "Where you headed?"

Parkhurst started slightly, as if caught unawares.

"Oh, hello, Conway." His features relaxed into a grin. "Didn't see you in the crush. Arnold Swope asked me up for cocktails."

"Say, I heard Hellman's coming up too. Swope says he's got big news for us."

"Who's Hellman anyhow?"

"You know... that big wind tunnel fellow from Tech."

"Oh, yes. Parkhurst's eyes were vague. "Wonder what Swope calls big news?"

"Don't know; he didn't seem to know himself."

"Hope it's better than that junk he's been printing in *Zodiac* lately."

"What does he care so long as people read it," Conway chuckled. He turned back to his public. "I'll be up in a minute myself. Tell Swope to save a drink."

"Better hurry," Parkhurst warned.

He had only taken a few steps when his progress was halted by a youth who emerged suddenly from behind one of the imitation marble pillars that disfigured the lobby. Alvin Winters had an uncanny faculty for showing up unexpectedly when you least wanted to see him. There were times when H. Gaylord Parkhurst felt that he belonged more to Alvin Winters than he belonged to himself. Still Alvin was his most faithful fan—and he didn't have so many that he could brush them off lightly these days.

"Hello, Mr. Parkhurst. How are you?"

"Fine, Alvin, fine."

"Did you receive my last letter?"

"Yes I did."

"What did you think of my remarks, Mr. Parkhurst?"

Alvin had outlined his remarks in three single-spaced typewritten pages using the red ribbon throughout.

"Well, to tell the truth, Alvin, I'm afraid I don't altogether agree with

you. I seriously doubt if the future holds anything so really new and wonderful for us. I mean *really* new and wonderful. Maybe we science-fiction people have been kidding ourselves all these years. Whistling in the dark so to speak."

"But that was the whole underlying philosophy of your 'New Worlds of Science', Mr. Parkhurst." Alvin protested. "Why you're the one who practically invented it."

"I know, Alvin, but that was twenty years ago. Doubtless science has plenty to show us yet—but somehow I'm losing faith in this bright new world of the future. Growing old, I guess."

HE LEFT Alvin staring after him disconsolantly. Perhaps he had been too abrupt with young Winters. After all he was becoming something of a legend to many of these youngsters. F. Scott Fitzgerald had been the spokesman for the Jazz Age. Hemingway had owned the roaring twenty's. And he—H. Gaylord Parkhurst—had also had his little hour back in the depressing thirty's. Ah, youth...

Confound it! He hadn't wired his mother yet. He knew she wouldn't sleep a wink all night unless she knew he had driven the entire two hundred miles from San Diego to Pasadena without being robbed or hitting a fencepost. After a moment's deliberation he wrote on the yellow pad: DEAR MOM. ARRIVED SAFELY ROME HOTEL FIVE P.M. FEELING FINE. HOME SUNDAY NIGHT. MUCH LOVE. GAYLORD.

"Send that right away," he instructed the clerk.

He started for the elevators again, feeling guilty that he had almost forgotten to wire his mother. Conway was still over by the coffee-shop surrounded by his worshipful fans. What was it the man had anyhow? Didn't know a thing about science. His characters were pretty good but that just about let him out.

He reached for the UP button, jerked back his hand when he found himself pressing a brilliant red fingernail.

"Sorry," he muttered. "Didn't notice what I was doing as usual."

The fingernail belonged to a dark-eyed girl in a smartly tailored white suit. She wore a convention-card pinned to her lapel like the one he was wearing. *Barbara Winfield*. The name failed to ring anything. Just a fan probably. Good-looking though.

"It almost takes two people to get an elevator in this place," she said, pressing the button again.

Gaylord smiled and mumbled something unintelligible. He never felt at ease around girls—especially girls as attractive as this one. He had always regretted that women had managed to infiltrate into science-fiction to such an extent. Female fans were either exceptionally smart—or exceptionally dumb; in either case he avoided them whenever possible. Why didn't they read articles in the women's magazines on "How to Test Your Sex-Appeal Quotient" or "Making Marriage Work" instead of getting all fired up about two-headed mutants on Venus, or dubious projects for turning the sun into a recurrent nova?

"I see you're at the convention, too," she remarked, glancing at his card. "Are you in business here, Mr. Parkhurst?"

"Not exactly," Parkhurst replied a bit stiffly. Good heavens! Was it possible that his name was entirely unknown to her? Must be a newcomer to science fiction—Although, somehow, she didn't look quite like a typical fan. Much too well-dressed to fit in the picture. It suddenly struck him that the trouble with most of the women who came to these affairs was that they didn't know how to get themselves together.

"I live in San Diego," he explained. "Seldom get up this way, as a matter-of-fact."

"San Diego?" Her glance was puzzled. "Are you the Parkhurst that's opened up that new tract down by Laguna?"

"I'm afraid not," he murmured.

"Aren't you in real estate?"

Gaylord favored her with one of his rare smiles. Ordinarily he would not have encouraged conversation with a strange young woman, but then she looked like a nice girl. Besides...he was almost old enough to be her father.

"I've dabbled a little," he admitted. "I own the exclusive development rights to the *Sinus Roris* and the *Mare Frigoris*. I also hold an option on three craters that may be discovered on the backside of the moon within the next ten years; a rather speculative investment, I'm afraid."

SHE STARED at him uncomprehending for a moment. Suddenly her eyes went wide. "I know what's the matter," she exclaimed; "I'll bet we're at two different conventions. Which one are you at?"

"I'm with this science-fiction bunch," Gaylord confessed. "The Pasadelicon we call it in our curious nomenclature."

"I'm with the Women's Escrow Club," she said. "We throw a party every year and invite our bosses."

They both laughed.

"There's always some kind of a convention going on at this hotel," Gaylord said. "They hand out the same badges to everybody."

A door slid back in the side of the wall disclosing a venerable elevator boy.

"Well, here's our elevator at last," Gaylord murmured. "I could have walked up to that cocktail party by this time."

The girl's eyebrows went up. "Are you headed for a cocktail party, too? That's right where I was going; all the big Los Angeles real-estate dealers are supposed to be there."

For some reason which he did not

in the least understand, Gaylord felt annoyed at the idea of this charming young woman drinking with a lot of big Los Angeles real-estate dealers.

"Er... Miss Winfield... I wonder if we could have a little convention of our own? I wonder if you would care to join me in a cocktail in the Iridium Room?"

Gaylord heard the words issuing from his mouth so that presumably he must be the one who was speaking them—but otherwise he was sure they could have no connection with himself. Quite evidently they originated in some wholly-strange personality that had invaded the frame until recently occupied by H. Gaylord Parkhurst. For H. Gaylord Parkhurst could never conceivably have asked a girl—especially a girl as gorgeous as this one—to join him in a cocktail. The idea would have scared him to death.

"The Iridium Room?" Miss Winfield's lovely dark eyes swept the lobby. "Is there a place by that name around here?"

"Every hotel like this one has an Iridium Room," Gaylord assured her. He was amazed at the ease with which he was carrying on the conversation. "If it isn't the Iridium Room, then it's the Terrace Room or the Emerald Room or the Venetian Room."

AFTER A brief search they discovered a cavern downstairs with the sign over the door, *Zircon Room*. A waiter guided them through the smoke and gloom to a little bench by the wall. After some debate, Gaylord ordered two stingers. He had never had a stinger before but this seemed like a good time to begin. He paid for the drinks with a twenty-dollar bill which he casually tossed on the tray. He had grown very fond of that twenty-dollar bill, but now he parted from it without a pang. What if he hadn't made a sale in weeks? He would get going again

afterwhile...when he got over this confounded writing slump.

Miss Winfield was smiling at him over the rim of her glass. She looked exactly like the models in the fashion magazines now. "Tell me—what do you do?"

Gaylord allowed just the right time to elapse before replying. "I... write."

"Really? I've always wanted to meet a real writer. What do you write?"

"Oh, lots of things," he replied, keeping his eyes modestly lowered. "You wouldn't believe it to look at me but I've destroyed the earth five times, wrecked the solar system twice, and once I turned the whole universe inside out."

"Do people actually read stories like that!"

"The people who come to science-fiction conventions do. Or at least they used to," he added.

"But those people I saw upstairs looked practically normal."

"Oh, they're normal enough," he shrugged. "But they've got a queer streak in their personality so that they don't give a hoot for the stories in the big circulation magazines... routine mysteries... domestic problems... young love... stuff like that. They have to get their escape by ducking into a kink in space, or going to a new world entirely. It's getting so there aren't any new worlds left any more."

"I supposed you're asked this question all the time, but do you think we'll ever go to the moon or Mars?"

Gaylord shook his head slowly. "I used to think so, but that was way back when I believed everything I wrote. I said the greatest thrill that a man could have would be when he first set foot on another planet. I also made the flat prediction that we would reach the moon in twenty years. Hadn't the faintest idea how we'd do it but I was sure we'd manage it somehow. Funniest part is that I convinced a lot of other people, too; it's my one

claim to fame." He chuckled. "I'm afraid time's running out fast."

She was watching him steadily. "Don't you find it so thrilling any more?"

"Yes, I suppose so. Touching a new world would still be the supreme thrill all right." He looked around him restlessly. "Trouble is I've been thinking and writing about it for so long; it's all getting flat and stale."

He sat pensively contemplating his empty glass. Strange how that drink had hardly affected him at all.

"I've got a girl friend whose husband is an engineer in an airplane plant," Miss Winfield said. "He thinks space-travel is almost here; he claims we could go to the moon now if we had the money."

"Don't you believe it."

"But he says it's true."

"I've been hearing about that engineer in an airplane plant who says we could go to the moon for years. I only wish I could meet him someday."

"Haven't you read those articles telling how it's all been planned in detail?" Miss Winfield asked.

"You can't tell me anything about those articles."

"Well, then—"

"Listen, my dear young woman," Gaylord said impressively. "It doesn't make the slightest difference whether we can go to the moon or not. So long as we can make money by making people *think* we can go to the moon."

IT STRUCK them both as being very funny. The thought of all those poor deluded people trying to get to the moon when they could be so much more comfortable in the *Zircon Room* of the Hotel Rome. Probably be impossible to get any stingers on the moon too. It seemed like a good time to order another round.

After they had finished with the moon Miss Winfield told him about her job in the escrow department of the Security First National. The of-

fice was underground, so that you never saw outdoors all day long. There was just enough window space to see people's feet moving along the sidewalk. The work was interesting but it got tiresome afterwhile like any other job. Sometimes people got mad when their escrow was slow going through and blamed it on you. There were days when you got so tired hearing those complaints and watching those feet that you wanted to scream. She had been looking after her mother who was sick until recently so that she hadn't really had a vacation in three years.

Gaylord sat listening sympathetically, uttering little exclamations of surprise or regret at appropriate moments. He was very conscious of Barbara's presence so close beside him. (They had gotten on a first-name basis after the third drink). Occasionally their knees touched under the table. Somebody was playing *Cocktails for Two* on the piano. Gosh, that had been popular about the time he was writing "The New Worlds of Science." Boy! If he could only write like that again.

It was evening when they finally emerged from the *Zircon Room*. Gaylord gazed with disdain upon the commonplace people parked around the lobby. He was in a lofty and exalted mood, and he wanted to hang on to it. If possible he wanted to go on getting more and more lofty and exalted.

He followed Barbara into the elevator and stood sedately beside her behind a fat woman with three sticky children and an elderly gentleman with a hearing aid. Barbara's party was on the fourth floor. They walked down the dimly lit hall that was a replica of all the halls in all the other old second-rate hotels in the country. She paused by the fire escape.

"Well...it was nice to meet you." She seemed suddenly rather shy as she gave him her hand. "The cocktails were nice."

He looked down at her awkwardly. His heart was thumping wildly and he could feel the sweat trickling down under his arms. "Barbara . . . I want to see you again tonight," he whispered hoarsely.

She hesitated keeping her eyes from his. "There was a meeting of the finance committee tonight—"

"The heck with the finance committee," he interrupted impatiently. "I've got my car here; we'll go for a drive."

The elevator discharged a load of passengers. There was the sound of voices approaching down the hall.

"I'll meet you at nine," he told her. "No—let's make it eight-thirty. Down in the lobby by the table with the jigsaw puzzle."

"All right."

She gave his hand a quick squeeze and hurried around the corner, just as a group of middle-aged men hove in sight. Big real-estate dealers from Los Angeles, Gaylord mused; his smile was distinctly condescending.

"ANOTHER one for you, Parkhurst?"

"Well . . . just a little one maybe."

To his intense chagrin, Arnold Swope took him at his word and poured him just a little one. Unquestionably a small soul. Above the din of voices he realized that the editor of *Zodiac* was trying to tell him something.

"Sorry to have to turn down that last story of yours, Parkhurst, but it's not what I'm after now. I'm trying to get away from the trick science and gadgetry type of yarn."

"That so?" Gaylord asked, indifferently. His head throbbed and his cheeks were burning.

"I'm trying to get stories of the future, in which the motivation springs mainly from the reactions of real honest-to-god people," Swope went on. "You know—the sort of folks you bump into every day in lunchrooms and busses. I hope you don't mind my

saying so, Parkhurst, but your characters are about as lifelike as a petrified robot. Your women are all such splendid cold sort of females. As Somerset Maugham said, the kind of women who never have to go to the bathroom. I'm convinced if science-fiction is going to progress, we've got to get a new point of view . . . a new outlook."

"Something new!" Gaylord exploded. His voice rose over the crowd. Arnold Swope was trying to tell him how to write science-fiction. Why he was writing science-fiction when this miserable little man didn't know Hiawatha from Superman.

"So you want something new, eh? You'll never find anything really new; it'll always be the same old world we've got right now."

"We're all entitled to our opinion." Swope replied calmly. "Look, Gaylord, why don't you come over here and sit down for awhile?"

Parkhurst shook him roughly aside. He waved one arm in a tragic gesture. "*That which hath been is that which shall be; and that which hath been done is that which shall be done; and there is no new thing under the sun. Is there a thing whereof men say, 'See, this is new?'*" Gaylord shook his head and laughed bitterly. "*It hath been already, in the ages which were before us.*"

"Wouldn't be too sure about that if I were you."

Hellman came striding briskly into the room beaming geniality. He was a stout, middle-aged man with a bright eye and an alert manner who resembled a high-pressure salesman more than a scientist.

Parkhurst was forgotten immediately.

Swope clapped for silence. "Attention, everybody. Dr. Hellman says he's got some news for us."

Hellman drew a gold watch from his vest pocket and stood for a full minute staring at it in silence. Then

he snapped shut the case and returned it to his pocket.

"That was the deadline, folks. Now I can talk. Believe me, I've got some news that really is news."

"Then let's have it!" Swope pleaded.

"Everybody ready?" Hellman cried. "Hold your breath now for here it comes. *We've reached the moon!*"

There was a stunned silence. Swope grunted and lit a cigarette. "You don't expect us to fall for that, do you?"

"Sounds like a gag," Conway remarked. "Something they cooked up to put some pep in the convention."

"I'll swear it's no gag," Hellman was suddenly serious. "The newspapers have had the story for a week, but they couldn't break it till now. It ought to hit the street any minute; it's probably on the radio now."

Swope's face was pale. "Do you mean to tell us there are human beings on the moon?" he demanded.

"Probably not actually on it yet," Hellman replied. "I'd say they're still about two hours out yet. Depends on how long it takes to set the ships down."

SUDDENLY he let out a whoop and waved his arms wildly. "Lord, it's good to be able to talk again. I've been living with that secret inside of me for weeks but I couldn't let out a peep. The military sure had us sewed up tight." He glared at the faces staring at him from around the room. "What's the matter with you guys anyhow? Now you can quit *reading* science-fiction and begin *living* it. And why doesn't somebody give me a drink?"

Everybody went into action at once. Some dived for the radio. Others made for the door. A few like Gaylord slipped quietly to the floor.

They had the radio going now.

"...ships have passed the neutral point and are maneuvering to land.

According to latest reports they're twenty thousand miles above the lunar surface over a region in the northern hemisphere called the...er...*Mare Imbrium*. That means Sea of Showers, folks, in case you didn't know. Now I think we have another flash coming in from Commander Zeitlin in charge of the expedition..."

Gaylord sat propped against the bedpost, listening but only half hearing. People were dashing in and out waving papers with black banner headlines. The telephone was ringing incessantly.

"Hey, Gay, telephone," Conway shouted from across the room. "It's the Universal Press. They sound all hopped up."

Parkhurst regarded him dully. "You mean they want to talk to me?"

"They sure do. Why...don't you remember? You predicted this twenty years ago; hit it right on the nose."

Gaylord struggled to his feet. He was still in a dense fog but there was a rift shining through.

"Take my advice and ask 'em for plenty," Conway whispered. "You're big stuff now."

Gaylord took the receiver. "This is Parkhurst. That's right. Oh, I just figured it would take about that long. What do you mean—lucky? You want a series, eh? I guess so. Okay. 'Bye.'"

He walked over to the window and threw it open. The quarter-moon was sailing serenely through a thin tissue of cirrus cloud. He drew the cool air into his lungs in great gulps.

Conway was calling him again. "Gay...telephone."

"Who is it this time?" he called back.

"Some TV outfit. They want you for some comments before the broadcast from the moon comes in."

"Broadcast from the moon...? When's that?"

"About midnight near as they know. This TV thing's for ten. They'll send over a car."

Parkhurst turned quickly. "What time is it now?"

"About eight-thirty."

"Oh, Lord, let me out of here!"

HE STARTED to fight his way across the room when Alvin Winters materialized in the doorway. Winters' bright young face was glowing with joy. Gaylord tried to duck into the bathroom, but already he could feel Alvin's hot breath on his neck.

"There're some reporters down in the lobby want to see you, Mr. Parkhurst. Some photographers, too. I told them I thought the best photograph would be one of you with the 'New Worlds of Science' open to page 137 where you make the prediction. I've got a copy in my suitcase. We could have the reporters up at my room and get the pictures there."

"Listen, Alvin." Gaylord fixed him with his glittering eye. "You're the world's greatest authority on my life. Go downstairs and invite those reporters up to your room. Tell 'em anything about me they want to know; but if they want any pictures they'll have to wait till after that moon broadcast."

A shade of doubt darkened Alvin Winters' countenance. "I don't know whether they'll like that or not, Mr. Parkhurst, but I'll see what we can do."

Gaylord waited in the hall until he heard the elevator wheezing up the shaft. Then he darted over to the stairs and went bounding down three at a time. He began talking to himself as he always did when he was excited. He was a success! Not a piddling little success but a great, big success. He was alive and young again. He'd be rich... famous. He could do anything now.

He peered cautiously around the lobby from behind the shelter of the news-stand. For an agonizing moment, he thought Barbara wasn't there. But she was; she was. Now he was talking to himself like something from D. H.

Lawrence. D. H. Lawrence—pooh. Who was *he*?

"Barbara, I'm so sorry to keep you waiting, but honest I couldn't get away."

She laid down the paper she had been reading. Her eyes were glowing as she gazed up into his. She had changed to another dress with some frilly stuff around the neck that made her look enchantingly young and girlish.

"I've been reading about you," she told him. "They've got your picture on the front page looking out of the moon."

"Let's get out of here before somebody recognizes me." He seized her arm and began steering her toward the door. "My car's right around the corner."

Gaylord took a winding road leading into the mountains that lay along the northern edge of the city. After climbing for half an hour he turned out at a wide place along the highway overlooking the valley. The hills were black under the pale moon but far in the distance the lights of Los Angeles formed a luminous carpet. They sat quietly listening to the breeze murmuring through the pines.

Presently Parkhurst cleared his throat. "I think maybe you could see the moon if you came over this way a little."

She edged over a few inches. Gaylord slipped an exploring arm around her. When she yielded, he leaned over and brushed her cheek with his lips. She was soft and fragrant and feminine and mysterious...

PARKHURST entered the room so silently that the group waiting around the radio scarcely heard him.

"Gay, we've been looking all over for you," Swope cried. "Here—take my chair. How about a drink?"

"No, thanks; I feel fine just as I am."

"Not even a little one?"

"Not even a little one."

There was a clatter from the radio. "Stand by, ladies and gentlemen." The announcer's voice was tense... husky. "The next voice you hear will be that of Commander Zeitlin speaking to you from the moon."

Alvin Winters appeared from somewhere. His face was screwed up tight. He was fighting back the tears. "Oh, gee, Mr. Parkhurst, this is it. This is

that time you wrote about. The time when we first reached out to touch another planet. You said that would be the greatest thrill a man could ever know."

"I was wrong about that, Alvin."

"Wrong?"

"Dead wrong." Gaylord's eyes were brooding as he dabbed at a streak of lipstick on his shirt. "The hell of it is it took me twenty years to find it out."



READIN' and WRITHIN'

(continued from page 41)

this may be because the Bradbury personality, which rightfully permeates every story, is exotic enough in itself; when placed against an exotic background, the result is too precious.

There are stories here to please almost every taste. I would not hesitate to recommend most of them. "The Fog Horn" is a delightful fantasy of a sea-serpent who falls in love with a fog horn. It is proof that Bradbury's nostalgia for the good old days is strong enough to embrace even the Jurassic Age.

"The Pedestrian" is the story of the last pedestrian in a world completely mechanized. This is Bradbury tilting at the windmills of machines and is, I think, the best of this sort he has ever done. Most of his stories of this type, such as "There Will Come Soft Rains" and "The Murderer" which is in this volume, are also fine, but are a little paranoic in their intensity. In "The Pedestrian" there is far more emphasis on the man, and the feeling of being trapped comes through.

"The April Witch" is a delightfully fey story of a witch who wants to taste mortal love. This is Bradbury in one of his softer moods, but not really at his best.

"The Fruit at the Bottom of the Bowl" is a murder story, and is one of the best pictures of compulsive actions I've ever read.

"I See You Never" is another of the author's Mexican stories—actually it is more of a portrait or sketch than a story—written with the rare sense of emotion which he occasionally displays.

"Embroidery" is a chronicle of oblivion told through three women who are waiting for it. This is a technique of which Bradbury is a master, wherein he catches horror far better with three pairs of knitting needles than most authors do with a panoramic view of the mushrooming atomic cloud.

"The Big Black and White Game" is the story of a baseball game between Negro servants and their white employers. I like this one, but, I'm inclined to suspect, not entirely because it's a good story. It's difficult to be objective about themes on which I have equally passionate views, but I think this story may exhibit a little Negrophilia. It is interesting, however, to compare this story—which was published in 1945—with "Way Up in the Middle of the Air", a later story with the same theme. The latter is a better and more mature story. It also shows a great growth in Bradbury's use and control of the poetic image.

Then there is the old man and the motion picture set in "The Meadow" which combines wonderful poetry with a superb use of symbolism.

I've already mentioned "The Great Wide World Over There" and "Sun and Shadow." That I think represents the cream of this book for me. This is about half of the contents, leaving an additional eleven stories which may please others as much as these eleven have me.

There are, I think, only two things I could wish for in future Bradbury. One is automatically being taken care of by the years. If he continues to mature as he has over the past six or seven years, I think he will become a major American writer. In addition to this, I wish he could come under the guidance of a creative editor, such as the late Maxwell Perkins, who could give him the occasional direction I think he needs.

In the meantime, read Bradbury. He's the perfect antidote to the coterie of bright, young authors who we are so often told will save American letters. He at least knows what to do with letters.

—Kendall Foster Crossen



"Whether or not you believe what I am telling you, I want you to spread this story — to as many people who will listen. Make an official report of it. Assume, if you wish, that it is a story told by a madman. But tell it! If I fail . . . it's your only chance of remaining free!"

COUNTERCHECK

Novelet of Hidden Conflict

by Charles De Vet

(illustrated by Tom Beecham)



ILL VAN HORNE said, carefully selecting each word, "We investigated your employees, as you requested, and we find that one of them, a certain Edgar Jeske, has no past!"

"I presume you mean that you have been able to find nothing about his background," Herbert Smith replied.

"No," Van Horne answered, unequivocally. "I mean exactly what I said. Jeske has no background—no past!"

"That's impossible."

"Of course it is," Van Horne agreed. "Nevertheless, when we make an investigation it's thorough; improbable as it may seem, Jeske's existence began the day he took employment with your company."

"How do you explain such a statement?"

"I can't; I was hoping you could."

Smith shrugged helplessly. "The only thing I can suggest is that you continue the investigation. Surely an organization with the resources of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and backed by the government, should

have little trouble in a case of this kind."

"We've used those resources you mentioned," Van Horne persisted, "and the fact that they are so extensive makes me certain that we missed nothing."

IN THE outer offices of Herbert Smith Associates, Projects Unlimited, a young man seated at a desk bearing the name-plate *Edgar Jeske*, was leaning on one elbow, with his chin in his hand, apparently lost in thought. He might have been enjoying a pleasant daydream, but he was not; one hand rested on the interoffice communicator and only he was aware that a third threadlike wire the exact color of the two standard wires, ran along its electrical connection.

Jeske was following every word spoken in the office of the president, Herbert Smith. When Van Horne made his report, Jeske knew that the time had come to move—fast.

He did not pause for his hat, nor wait for an elevator, but went directly down the stairs and out into the street.

He paused for a moment at the exit of the office building. From his right he caught the strong wash of



Fifty yards up the cab paused, bucked once joltingly, and something tore a long, ragged gash in one wall.

danger, and fear blossomed up in his stomach. Someone, very near, had detected him and the emotional-pattern of that someone's thoughts were dead-ly. Jeske let the fear ride him for he knew his reflexes would be all the sharper because of it. Casting one lightning glance at the source of the danger—a dark man in a blue serge suit—he moved!

A pedestrian stood open-mouthed, staring at the spot from which Jeske had vanished. The wall next to the spot blackened abruptly, the center of the black liquifying, and bits of smouldering concrete trailed small streams of smoke as they fell to the ground.

The dark man in the blue serge suit cursed under his breath and pocketed the small weapon he held in his hand. *"I've lost him,"* he broadcast. *"He vanished right before my eyes."*

One flight up, Smith caught the broadcast as he sat talking with Van Horne. *"Find him again,"* Smith flashed back.

"I've located him," a thought from a second man reached Smith.

"Kill him. Quick."

"Damn!" the exclamation came to Smith from the second source. *"He disappeared again."*

"Follow his thoughts, you fools," Smith stormed. *"He can move faster than your eyesight can follow, so forget about looking for him. But he has to think. Keep your mental identify-pattern of every person within the pocket, then wait for an extraneous thought-pattern!"* It will have to be his. Be alert!"

All this thought-exchange occurred on the instant as Smith, with another facet of his mind carried on a conversation with Van Horne. "I really don't know anything about him, except what information he gave on his application-blank," Smith said. "I'd suggest we go over it together, and see what we can find."

JESKE PAUSED. This high speed was a tremendous drain on his vitality; he had to use it as sparingly as possible, for he might have need of all his energy before he could escape the net he felt around him.

Across the street, a third man in a blue serge suit went into action the moment Jeske paused and became visible to normal optics. Jeske smiled ironically as he noted the suit. That was one of the weaknesses of the Kunklies: Little imagination or ingenuity. Blue serge was a good anonymous color and suit material, ideal for subterfuge, and so every Kunklie wore one making himself conspicuous to the most stupid observer.

Once again Jeske caught the danger-emanation, well in time, and moved another abrupt block. The Kunklies broadcast emotions faster than they were able to move, and Jeske knew he could easily avoid harm—as long as they never concentrated more than one man against him, at one place.

Three more times he was forced to switch localities. His chest was beginning to tighten with the strain of his frantic breathing. Moving at this speed took as much exertion as though he had gone the distance slower—more, in fact—and he had covered a great deal of territory in a brief period of time.

But he couldn't linger; each time he stopped there was a Kunklie waiting. Suddenly he understood why: They were following his thoughts! He should have realized that sooner. Desperately he searched for means of evasion. He had no time to establish a decoy of false identity. Swiftly he formed his plan and turned his every effort to keeping his mind blank.

When he came to a stop the next time no Kunklie menaced him and he jumped into an idle heliocab. "Up!" he barked. "Ten dollars if you make the top lane in ten seconds!"

The cabby was a child of this city-jungle and his survival reflexes re-

sponded to the promise of money with action. The cab went up with a leap that pulled Jeske down into his seat and bent his neck backward.

Fifty yards up the cab paused, bucked once joltingly, and something tore a long ragged gash in one wall. The cabby righted his car automatically—before he threw a startled look over one shoulder at Jeske. "My God, Mac, what happened?" he blurted.

"You're on your own," Jeske replied. "Get out of here fast, if you want to live!"

The cabby's lips were a thin streak in his face and the look he gave Jeske promised dire things to come, but he threw the aircar into a slanting, motor-driven dive, using his altitude for acceleration.

Another blackened hole appeared in the floor, before they came out of their dive; but the cabby stayed with it, and Jeske sat with his mind as blank as he could possibly make it as the buildings shot by beneath him.

When the cab straightened again they had covered several miles, and Jeske knew they had left the danger area behind.

"Go on about five more miles," Jeske said, "and then leave me off at the nearest cab stand."

The cabby didn't turn or answer, but when he landed ten minutes later it wasn't at a cab-stand; it was a vacant lot near the edge of town. He stepped outside and Jeske followed.

"Now, Mac," the cabby said, "we'll settle this little thing. You knew what you were getting me into when you hopped my boat. In just two seconds you're gonna have a mouth full of broken teeth. Nobody kin..."

Jeske held up his hand. "How much damage do you think has been done to your vehicle?" he asked.

"How much damage?" The cabby stopped at the unexpected interruption. "Why it'll probably cost me a grand to get that baby back in shape."

Wordlessly Jeske unsnapped a con-

cealed pocket in his belt. He drew out a thousand. And an extra one for the two green slips of currency. "Here's a thousand. And an extra one for the risk to your neck."

The cabby took the money, and turned it over in his hands. "Is this any good?" he asked.

"You'll find that it is," Jeske said—and vanished.

2



AN HORNE unlocked the front door of his home, stepped inside and snapped on the lights.

"Welcome home," greeted the dark-haired young man seated comfortably in his favorite loung-

ing chair. The gun which he held—aimed at Van Horne's middle—rested in his hand, languidly, but steadily.

Van Horne's training, and his naturally-alert mind took in the situation in a flash. He had never seen the man before, but the bull-like build, the handsome features, and other minor points of identity all added up to one answer. "You're Jeske," he said. "What are you doing here?"

"Let's say I just want to talk," Jeske answered. "Don't let this gun disturb you. I'm using it for two reasons only. One, I want to make certain that you'll listen to me; two, so you'll see I'm deadly serious."

"I'll listen," Van Horne said. "So you can put the gun away."

Jeske's pause was barely perceptible. "I'll do better than that," he said. "If you will take that chair across from me," he indicated with a leisurely nod of his head, "I'll place the gun on the table—an equal distance from each of us." He tossed the gun on the table.

"Thank you." Van Horne sat down. "You realize, of course, that having placed the gun on the table, you are now at a distinct disadvantage?" he said.

"In what way?" Jeske asked.

"If I decide to reach for it, I'll have the advantage of a split-second start and I'll beat you to it."

Jeske smiled pleasantly. He had a charm all of his own, Van Horne acknowledged as he found himself responding to Jeske's smile. "You are presupposing that your reflexes are faster than mine," Jeske said; "I would advise you not to gamble on it."

Van Horne acknowledged the bluff with the inner glow of stimulation an exciting situation always brought. This meeting definitely promised to be interesting. "Then we'll call it a stalemate," he said.

"Before we continue," Jeske said, "let me give you one warning. If you reach for that gun, and I beat you to it, I'll shoot to kill; I don't like impulsive people."

"I'll remember that," Van Horne answered. "If I decide to reach, I'll reciprocate in kind. Shall we continue?"

"As a beginning," Jeske said, "I want you to know that I heard your meeting with Smith today, and everything you talked about."

Van Horne's eyebrows raised inquiringly. "And," he prompted.

"And I've come to tell you what you want to know about myself," Jeske said. "You won't believe what I tell you, but right now that isn't important; I just want you to know it. In time you *will* believe."

Jeske stopped and went over his means of expressing what he wanted to say. "If you had investigated Smith as thoroughly as you did me," he said, "you'd have found that he has no apparent background either.

You see...Smith and I are not of this world—or your race."

He watched for the play of emotions on Van Horne's face, but none showed. Whichever way he might have taken Jeske's words, Van Horne had not gotten where he was by callow naivete.

"Smith's people are a race imbued with the lust of conquest," Jeske continued. "He, and those with him—there are more than a thousand—are the forerunners of that conquest. Whether or not you believe what I am telling you, I want you to spread this story—to as many people as will listen. Make an official report of it. Assume, if you wish, that it is a story told by a madman. But tell it! If I fail to stop them, it's your one chance of remaining free."

WHEN VAN HORNE saw that Jeske had said all he intended, for the time being, he remarked, "The only part of your story that sounded true was that you are a madman."

"I expected that reaction," Jeske answered, "so I'm not disappointed. Tell me this, will you? Personally you like Smith a great deal, don't you?"

"That's right," Van Horne said. "And what does that prove?"

"One of the talents of Smith's race is that they can read minds. He studies you as he talks with you; he sees how you are reacting to whatever he says or does, and knows exactly what to say to win your best opinion."

Van Horne yawned. "What other unusual talents does Smith and his people have?" he asked cynically. In the back of his mind he wondered how much trouble he'd have with this man when the time came to seize him.

"They have symbiosis," Jeske said. "Their culture is a four-level organization. The top level, or heirarchy, consists of roughly one thousand members, having symbiosis among themselves; and each one has a controlling symbiosis with a thousand on the

second level. Each member of the second level controls a thousand of the third, and on down through four levels."

Van Horne found himself, not believing, but interested in this strange hallucination. He decided to go along with the madman. "Starting with a thousand on the top level and going through four levels, as you explained, would give them a population of approximately one trillion," he said.

"It's slightly greater," Jeske replied. "They inhabit well over six hundred worlds in their portion of the galaxy. And your Earth is the first step in a gigantic expansion project. They must be stopped."

"And just where do you come into this game?" Van Horne asked.

"I am a member of one of the conquered worlds," Jeske replied; "I am trying to thwart their further expansion."

"Are you alone?"

"I am the only one of my group on the Earth," Jeske replied. "When the Kunklies attempted to take over our world we fought them. They used their superior power to wipe out our race—except for a few hundred of us who managed to capture one of their space vessels and escape."

"Where did you go?" Strangely Van Horne found himself fascinated with Jeske's tale, and completely carried along with it.

"We decided that boldness was our only chance of survival," Jeske answered. "We returned to their home world and infiltrated into their population."

"Were you so much like them that that was possible?"

"Quite probably, both our races came from the same root-stock," Jeske said, "for many of our native traits are similar. We both have the ability to change our form to any desired shape; therefore we could pass quite easily as members of their world."

"Then you can read my mind, too," Van Horne said. Here might be the chance to expose the absurdity of Jeske's story.

"No," Jeske answered. "Somewhere in the lost past, our abilities along that line must have been similar; but now we can read only emotions, not thoughts. The Kunklies have the advantage of us there."

"You say Smith has others of his race here?"

"I believe Smith brought with him the entire thousand, with whom he maintains symbiosis in the second level."

"And you expect to defeat him and his thousand by yourself? Despite the fact that they possess mind-reading ability, and you do not?"

"I have one advantage," Jeske said. "My native world is a 'heavy' planet. On their 'light' worlds—and the Earth—I can move with a speed which is faster than their optic nerves can follow. I make a pretty elusive target."

"Are you asking me to believe that you are here to help us Earth people out of purely altruistic motives?" Van Horne asked.

"Not entirely," Jeske replied. "The few of our race who escaped have dedicated ourselves to stopping the Kunklies' expansion; my mission here is part of our plan for doing that. If we are successful, we even hope to drive them back—or at least force them to live in amity with their neighbors."

Van Horne reached swiftly across the table and picked up the gun. "I'm afraid that I can no longer humor you by listening to your phantasy," he said. "Raise your hands, please."

Jeske's hands remained at his sides, and he smiled thinly. "Surely you aren't fool enough to believe that the gun is loaded?"

"You're bluffing," Van Horne said.

"Am I?" Jeske studied his finger-

nails. "Then I may as well make the bluff a good one. When you pull that trigger, the gun will explode and kill you."

While Van Horne stood undecided, Jeske rose and walked to the door. "You're an intelligent man," he said to Van Horne. "The next time you're with Smith you'll be able to see that I have told you the truth. Watch for little things. Like how his body conforms itself—in a way no Earth body can—to fit the chair he sits in. Tell him a joke. Watch how his response is a split-second later than it should be—they have no sense of humor. 'He'll laugh, but only after he reads in your mind that he's supposed to. Or just tell him what I've told you. He'll see that you know, and probably admit the truth, or his version of it. But if you want to stay alive, spread the story—as I suggested—before you meet him again. Jeske opened the door and was gone.

Van Horne looked down at the small weapon in his hand. He turned and went into the kitchen at the rear of his apartment. Filling a bucket with water he dropped the gun into it. For a moment he debated whether to call the police or his office, but decided against it.

"GOOD AFTERNOON, my friend Frank."

Frank Richey looked up. He frowned slightly as he recognized Edgar Jeske. He knew Jeske only slightly, and he experienced an instinctive aversion to having anyone address him with familiarity without better acquaintanceship. He nodded tersely.

Jeske, however, seemed unaware of the other's coolness. He slapped Richey jovially on the shoulder. "I've been waiting to speak with you," Jeske said.

Richey felt a tiny twinge of sharp pain in his shoulder where Jeske's

hand landed and immediately his annoyance was swept away in a cloud of haziness that descended over his senses. He continued to walk forward at Jeske's side but a close observer would have noticed that his sight was glazed and that he walked with a stiff, robot-like pace. The apparent conversation Jeske continued was only one-sided.

When they reached the river Jeske sat on the grass of the river bank and, at a soft word from him, Richey sat also. He remained erect, staring at the water without interest. They waited there until the dusk had deepened to darkness.

Only then did Jeske rise and look carefully about him before he took Richey by the hand and helped him to his feet. They walked to the river edge and stood for a moment, still hand in hand, before they stepped off the bank and into the river. The water closed over their heads and only a few bubbles marked the spot where they had entered.

Once inside the space ship at the bottom of the river Jeske led Richey to a couch and bade him lie down. From a corner cabinet, Jeske removed a short syringe and injected a light green liquid into Richey's forearm. Then he watched until the only sign of life was Richey's slow and shallow breathing.

Jeske stripped himself of every article of clothing and replaced them with those which he removed from Richey. The clothing fit well for he had been careful in picking his involuntary guest. Now Jeske was ready for his next step.

He knelt at Richey's side and studied the features of the man before him, intently. At first almost imperceptibly, Jeske's features began to alter. His nostrils became a shade thinner and wider, his lips narrowed and the slight bow straightened. His eye-openings became more nearly elliptical. Jeske brought his hands to his face and

vigorously massaged his cheeks and jawline until small hollows pressed against his teeth.

Satisfied with what he had done so far, Jeske rose and walked to the cabinet in the wall of the room. He returned to Richey with a mirror, a strong pair of tweezers, and several small bottles in his hands. He began plucking hair from the fore edge of his scalp until he had reformed the hairline a quarter inch back and left the center with a small widow's peak. Next he narrowed the arch of his eyebrows. After a careful inspection of his work, he moistened his hair with fluid from two of the bottles. The hair darkened and twisted into small ringlets. The skin itself he saw was the correct shade.

Finally Jeske was satisfied. His face, feature for feature, was the same as that of Richey. He connected a set of anodes to Richey's temples, and a set of earphones to his own ears—both sets of which were connected to a small dynamo-powered machine—and lay down and slept. When he awoke, he knew, his mind would retain all of Richey's essential memories.

One segment of his mind would adopt the Richey identity, and Jeske would let it dominate his conscious thinking. It would carry on semi-independent of his own thoughts and sensations, which would be held to a lower level of audibility. This would serve the purpose of an ideal decoy-identity, and prevent the Kunklies from catching Jeske's personal thoughts. It would be synonymous to a small sound being drowned out by a much louder one.

JESKE LEFT Richey's bedroom apartment in the Majestic Hotel and went downstairs. The diningroom was crowded, but he found a small table at the rear.

While he waited for his order he looked over the other diners. To his right a brown-haired girl with large

features was eating baked trout and potatoes. Directly ahead three girls sat at one of the round tavern-type tables. Jeske studied them with interest. Their dress would be called daring by Earth standards, and they wore more make-up than their sex generally assumed. Two of the girls were rather ordinary, but the third was beautiful. Something about her held Jeske's fascinated attention.

With surprise he finally understood that the girl's attraction was caused by the response of his male glands to her cogent female allure. One of the abilities of Jeske's race was to assimilate the glandular and emotional proclivities of the peoples whose shapes they assumed.

Now Jeske found his gaze bound to the girl by an animated interest which was—he had to admit it to himself—desire!

The girl looked up, met Jeske's gaze, and smiled. Startled, Jeske shifted to the portion of his mind that held Richey's memory and thought-pattern and found that Richey was a friend of hers. He read further and found that her name was Lelanne. She was the star of an act playing at the next door theater, called the Rialto. She went under the theatrical billing of Lelanne, the Body Beautiful. The outstanding characteristic of the act was the gradual exposing of the females' bodies, for the edification of the audience. And for male response to her body Lelanne had no equal.

The girls passed his table and Lelanne leaned over and whispered, "I'll stop in a little after midnight."

Again Jeske shifted to Richey's memory-pattern and found, with surprise, that Richey was a man very attractive to the female sex. He was a friend of Lelanne's, and their friendship was on the point of becoming closer; very probably, shortly after midnight—as Lelanne had hinted.

3



JESKE HAD no opportunity to rig his spy-wire, from Kennedy's desk to Smith's office, until the second day. But Van Horne did not appear until several hours later, and when he did Jeske was ready.

Van Horne went directly into Smith's office, passing Jeske's desk on the way. After he had gone by, Jeske rested his hand idly on the interoffice communicator. "Welcome back, my friend," he heard Smith say. "Have you found out anything new about Jeske?"

"Nothing that you're expecting," Van Horne replied. "By the way, where is he? I noticed that his desk was empty as I passed through the outer office."

"He didn't show up for work this morning," Smith answered.

"Last night when I went home I found him waiting for me," Van Horne said.

"You did?" Smith assumed a surprised look.

"Yes, and he told me a story."

"Then we may as well lay our cards on the table," Smith said. "His story was true."

"You admit it?"

"I'd be a fool to deny it. I can read in your mind that you have been observing me as Jeske suggested, and you've already noticed several discrepancies in my makeup."

"They're quite apparent, now that I look for them," Van Horne said thoughtfully. "And it's true that you can read my mind?"

Smith nodded. "I see that you are wondering why I'd admit Jeske's story is true, when it makes me such a vil-

lain. *That* part isn't true, and I'm certain I can convince you that it isn't before you leave here. But first I'd like to give my version of the story.

"First, we Kunklies are not bent on conquest. We do like to spread the benefits of our culture, but the only selfish purpose we have in that is we want a strong league of cooperative worlds. We've found hints of a confederation, off to the center of the galaxy from our worlds, whose races are so completely alien from our own that there is no possibility except strife when our two civilizations mesh. When that time comes we want all the strength possible on our side."

"Why have you kept your presence here secret?" Van Horne asked. Smith's apparent ability to read his mind, plus the peculiarities of his bodily structure, had convinced Van Horne that he must believe Smith and Jeske were actually members of alien races.

"We have found," Smith said slowly, "that a race always fears the unfamiliar, and its fears take the form of aggressive action. In our contacts in the past, whenever we revealed our alien origin, at the start, we were always met with hostility. Now we attempt to prove that we are friends before making known who and what we are."

"And that is what you have in mind for the Earth?"

"Yes. As you will remember, we notified your government—acting the part of ordinary Earth men, of course—that we intended to begin the manufacture of a product which would have great repercussions on your mode of living. We did that to give you time to make any plans necessary before the impact hit."

"I'm quite aware of that," Van Horne answered, "and that is a point in your favor. Your invention is supposed to revolutionize transportation, is it not?"

"Not all transportation, but a large

part of it," Smith answered. "Our product, the loco-unit, is quite standard equipment on our worlds. It is a harness, made to fit the legs, that appears as a pliable network of fine metal. Actually it is based on the principal of pulleys and leverage. Using one of our harnesses, a man can walk at the rate of, say, fifteen miles an hour, using considerably less energy than he now uses for strolling. When we reveal who we are, later on, our having given you the benefit of this great invention will be one proof of our amicable intentions."

"You expect it to make busses and taxis obsolete, as I understand it," Van Horne said.

"We are certain that it will," Smith replied. "After we get the harnesses into mass-production we are going a bit further and make them equipped with wheels. With one a man can travel longer distances, and faster. When he reaches his destination he merely folds the loco-unit and puts it in a corner in his home—or any other convenient place. Deluxe models will be enclosed. Thus you can see that almost all passenger ground vehicles will be replaced. Carry that through to the industries directly and indirectly connected with the making, fueling, or servicing of your present vehicles, and you will realize what great changes will inevitably have to be made."

"Won't that be likely to disrupt our economy?"

"Our experience has been that it will not—in any harmful way at least. We will absorb the men thrown out of employment into our factories—at better pay, shorter working hours, and improved working conditions. Your people will benefit in every way."

Van Horne sat for a long time reflecting on what the other had told him. Finally he said. "Naturally I'm convinced that you are alien beings. But can you give me any proof that Jeske is lying?"

"I can give you all you want," Smith replied confidently. "We'll use his very arguments to convict him. He said that he and his fellows who escaped our so-called destruction of his world have infiltrated into our home planet population. Yet they can't read minds, by his own admission. Do you think we'd be unable to ferret them out? It would be like deaf mutes trying to pass themselves off as normal speaking men."

"And how would the survivors fit into our symbiosis? Do you think we could possibly miss detecting such obviously-different intellects?"

"And a final argument which should convince you. Would a race of over a trillion members—plus equally greater technological development—have to use such subtle means as Jeske suggested to conquer a world of two billion?"

"We could send a horde of spaceships, hover above your world and obliterate you, without danger to ourselves. Or we could offer to accept your surrender—and you would have no choice but to capitulate to the mere threat of aggression from us."

"Your version does sound more convincing than Jeske's," Van Horne admitted. "But where does he fit in?"

"Jeske is a member of a small band of malcontents from one of our associate worlds," Smith answered. "There's always the lunatic fringe, opposed to any progress; you probably have them on your own world. Now, for your own sake, as well as ours, will you keep this a secret between us?"

Van Horne nodded.

THAT EVENING after work, Jeske returned to the Majestic and—sometimes using his speed of movement to avoid detection—explored the hotel thoroughly. He never knew when he might have need of an intimate knowledge of his surroundings. He did

not make the mistake of underrating the Kunklies; they were well aware that he was still at large, and that he was dangerous to their plans. They would be seeking him every moment.

He went to bed and lay for hours reviewing everything that had happened, and planned in advance, as well as he could, for any possible contingencies. The next step, he decided, was for him to get Smith alone.

Shortly after twelve o'clock he heard a light tapping on his door, and a sensation of pleasurable anticipation went through his muscles. He opened the door and a sweet-scented bit of Earthly loveliness slipped into his room. The luscious Lelanne had kept her promise!

She slipped off her light wrapper, and the body that had launched a thousand wolf-whistles stood poised, and eager. Her eyes were heavy black grapes, her mouth a slice of moist red flesh, and her sooty black hair tangled up his thoughts in her body.

The rest of the night Jeske tasted joys which were the greatest this world had the power to bestow upon him. And the ardent Lelanne knew that she had met a man who was out of this world!

Jeske sipped his orange juice slowly the next morning, while he went over his pleasant thoughts of the night before—always careful to keep the Rich-ey—entity—element of his mind uppermost. But while his attention seemed all on his drink, his mind, ever alert for danger, made its swift, though seemingly casual, survey of the room.

He passed quickly over the brown-haired girl with the large features who sat across the dining-room from him. But he had noted her carefully in passing. She had been eating here the first meal he'd had at the Majestic. Perhaps that was merely a coincidence. But he never left more to chance than he was compelled to.

Tentatively he felt for her emotional aura. It came to him, soft, unex-

cited, but deadly—and directed all toward him.

Swiftly Jeske went over in his mind what it meant. She was a Kunklie, of course. But was she here merely to watch him? Quite probably Smith had put a watcher on each of his employees, suspecting that he would return. Or had they run him down?

His scanning gaze passed a man in a blue serge suit—and he knew the answer! Excitement rushed through him and sweat brought a dry stinging to his cheeks. His mind passed quickly from the thought of the weapon in his belt. It was a potent weapon, but it would do little to protect him from a thousand Kunklies.

He rose to his feet, strolled to the cashier's cage and paid for his breakfast. Holding himself in close restraint he walked to the hotel's lobby and bought a morning paper. In one of the lounge-chairs he spied a second man in blue. From all around him, and outside the hotel, he sensed the reek of the Kunklies animosity. The sheer power of it was a steady beat coming through the brick and cement of the walls to where he sat.

As he sat with his eyes on the paper he went over his possible courses, and found himself without a good one. His only chance now, he decided, was to bring Smith to him.

Jeske lay his paper to one side, stretched his arms above his head, and yawned. He looked at his watch. Rising to his feet he wandered over to a telephone-booth and let himself in.

He dialed a number and waited a half-minute for an answer.

"Mr. Van Horne?" he said. "This is Edgar Jeske. Don't ask any questions—there's no time. I'm at the Majestic Hotel. I want you to come down here. It's more than a matter of life or death. When you come in, don't look for me, try not to even think of me, but go directly to the men's restroom. And hurry!" Jeske hung up.

EXACTLY twelve minutes later Van Horne entered the lobby. He did not pause but walked through to the men's room. Jeske rose and followed. Once inside he looked quickly around, to make certain that the room was empty, and turned the lock.

"I estimate that they'll give us ten minutes to come out before they risk unfavorable attention by coming in after us," he said.

"What's this all about?" Van Horne demanded.

"In that ten minutes I've got to convince you that my story, and not Smith's, is the true one," Jeske said. "By now he probably has you believing that I'm a scoundrel, or at best a crackpot. But you're a logical man, and I believe, a fair one; you should realize that with his ability to read your mind you wouldn't be too hard to convince. Will you give me the chance to show that he lied?"

Van Horne caught the urgency in Jeske's voice, and his obvious sincerity. He was a man who thought and acted fast, when necessity demanded. "Go ahead," he said.

"Thank you," Jeske said. "Tell me first what arguments of Smith's sounded the most convincing."

"To be perfectly frank, they all did," Van Horne replied. "But let's start with this: He said it would be as impossible for you to hide among his people as it would be for a deaf mute to pass as a normal speaking man among us."

"On the face of it that's true," Jeske said, speaking rapidly. "But *all* his people are not able to read minds, nor do they all have symbiosis. There are physiological failures—and biological defectives—there, the same as there are here. If I came to your Earth, took the place of a deaf-mute, assumed his very form and likeness, memorized his complete consciousness-pattern and memory—and we have instruments that enable us to do just

that—how would you pick me out from the million other deaf mutes on your world?"

"I'll buy that," Van Horne said. "Next, if they intended to conquer us why couldn't they do it merely by standing off in space and blasting us into oblivion?"

"They could—with a vast expenditure of resources, and time. And, of course, they'd have the job of repairing the damage after it was over. But why should they choose that in preference to this easier, more insidious manner?"

"You never did tell me just what their plan of conquest is—according to your version," Van Horne said.

Jeske glanced at his watch. Three precious minutes gone. "The first step you know," he said. "To take over a large part of your transportation, and absorb the resultant unemployed into their factories. Step by step they would carry on the same program, until most of you were working for them. In a relatively short time they would hold key positions throughout your world. Their members would be all around you, reading your minds, watching for signs of unrest, revolt. You couldn't begin a movement to oppose them without their knowing it; you'd be completely stymied before you realized what was going on.

"When they had their stranglehold secured they would do a very simple thing: Separate your sexes for one generation, and you would be wiped out. The Kunklies would possess your world without having actually to kill one human being."

"It sounds possible," Van Horne said. "However, I'd have to have more time to think on it before I could decide. Smith also said that they'd only have to convince us of their numerical and technological superiority and we'd realize the futility of resistance and capitulate."

"He lied again there," Jeske glanced

at his wristwatch. Three and three-quarters more minutes! "They've already made very extensive tests, and they've found that you would fight! And that's what they're afraid of. Also it brings me to my only hope of defeating them.

"The Kunklies can't stand pain. Their symbiosis, at least in the upper, hierarchy level, is so close that every time one of them is exposed to pain, all the others suffer. Throughout the generations they have been battered by almost unceasing pain, until avoiding it has become a psychosis with them. The instinct to avoid it now dominates them as powerfully as your own instinct of survival dominates you; they would much prefer death to any appreciable amount of suffering.

"They have eliminated the shock of death with drugs, and erected every defense they could devise against any other form of pain. But Smith has made himself vulnerable by coming here. And that is why he fears me. If I can hurt him, every pang he feels will be suffered by every member of the second level here, and of the entire hierarchy back on his home planet." One more minute, Jeske saw.

"Smith and his hierarchy have become so dependant upon each other that their wills are not strong, individually. My own mind is comparatively so much more powerful than Smith's, that by using a method inherent in my race, I could punish him severely, without laying a hand on him—if I could bring him near enough. I had planned to get him alone where I could use this power against him, but now it's too late and I have to take desperate measures. And that is why I called you. I need your help to get him here. Will you do it, or haven't I convinced you yet?"

"I..." Van Horne hesitated. "I honestly don't know," he said haltingly.

"Then I've lost, because we haven't

time for any more arguments," Jeske said. "We'll have to go out now. I'd advise you to leave immediately—if you can!"

4



HE LOBBY was empty. Jeske tensed, ready to dash at the first sign of movement. The Kunklies, he realized, had cleared the lobby to give them unrestricted action. From outside the hotel he could feel them

waiting.

Suddenly, a sound that would ordinarily be very commonplace, broke the silence, and Jeske's taut reflexes responded to it automatically. He moved up a flight of stairs. It was a child's voice, coming from the writing room off the lobby. "Mother," the voice called.

Jeske looked down from the mezzanine as the child came running out into the lobby. He saw Van Horne. "Where's my mother?" he asked. He was about six years old.

"I don't know, little boy," Van Horne replied. "Come here, and we'll go look for her."

"No," the boy answered. He started to cry. "I want my mommy," he said.

Still crying he ran toward the outside entrance. His body seemed to hesitate, turn half around, and blacken suddenly as it slumped to the floor, a smoking, charred hulk. Van Horne's face twisted with anger and pity.

"Get behind the davenport, and lie on the floor!" Jeske called to Van Horne. "They'll kill you too." Numbly Van Horne looked up.

Abruptly, excruciatingly, Jeske realized that he had been caught nap-

ping. The scene below, and the effusion of danger from the outside, had blinded him to that close at hand. From his left he caught the Kunklie taint, and he knew that it was too late for him to move now.

He heard the shot and stiffened to receive the blow. But even as he realized that he was not dead, he remembered that Kunklie weapons were silent; the shot he heard must have come from an Earthgun. Quickly he glanced to his left. A man in a blue serge suit slumped over the rail; down below Van Horne stood with his legs spread and a pistol in his hand.

"I believe you now," Van Horne said.

DOWN IN the basement of the hotel, Jeske knew he had a few minutes to collect his mental resources. His big job now was to stay alive long enough to find Smith. Smith had no way of knowing what Jeske could do to him, mentally, and he might like to be in on the kill. Jeske prayed that if he came, it would be soon, for his time was running out.

When he heard the Kunklies on the stairs he went to the coal-chute and opened it silently. He thanked his luck that he had made his survey of the hotel in time to know his way around.

The coal-chute opened on an alley. Jeske shut off the Richey portion of his consciousness and kept his own at a low ebb. They would be following the Richey-emanations and would lose him for a few minutes.

He was halfway to the alley entrance before they traced him. From here on he would have to make his decisions on the spur of the moment. . .

Jeske moved out into the street. Except for a half-dozen waiting Kunklies, it was empty. He went four quick blocks and found every street the same. Then for the first time he realized how complete was the net the

Kunklies had drawn around him. He knew they had spread a webwork that probably extended for a radius of several miles. Too far for him to escape on foot. And somehow they had managed to clear the entire district of aircars. There was not even a ground car in the area; no escape!

If Smith were anywhere in the vicinity Jeske was unable to identify him. He decided to remain near the Majestic. His best chance of finding Smith would be there.

Jeske kept his speed just above the rate optic-muscles could follow, but each time he stopped he found at least one Kunklie waiting. He needed a place to hide. Otherwise, he'd be spent in a few more minutes. But where?

Another minute and his heart began to pound fiercely, he had to take drastic action. He stopped running and shot the Kunklie that waited for him. Moving a few feet each time he shot the next two that appeared, and leaned with his shoulder against an outside wall of the Majestic.

That gave him only a half-minute of rest before he felt them converging on him again. Move! The word was becoming a nightmare.

His plan, this far, had been to keep his mind as blank as possible in the hope of throwing off pursuit; but he realized now that they were collected too thick around him. There had to be a better way, he decided. There was; he loosed the Richey-segment of his mind and let it carry on in normal fashion. They'd be able to read every inflection, but beneath its cloak Jeske had time to think and form a new plan.

Barely in time, he realized what he must do. His legs trembled with exhaustion as he stopped. But for his next step to succeed he had to move again, and fast. Quickly he shot the inevitable waiting Kunklie in the shoulder—deliberately not killing him.

As the wounded man fell, writhing,

to the street Jeske caught the anguish of a thousand Kunklies around him as they suffered the agony of their wounded comrade; that would furnish ample distraction, for some time.

Jeske went into the hotel, stepped into the elevator, and shot upward. Halfway to the roof he felt the anguish below him die. That was too fast for drug-action; they must have shot the wounded man. That meant they intended to spare nothing to get him.

He left the door of the elevator open as he came out on the roof. The Kunklies would not be able to use it when they came up after him.

JESKE LAY flat on his back on the roof, collecting every bit of recuperation possible. He held his mind quiet; they might not be able to read him this far above them.

But they did. Gradually he became aware of a muted hum beneath him. It sounded like a rising elevator. He jerked his head to one side and saw that the elevator door remained open, with the cage still here. Then he remembered. There was a freight-elevator!

Jeske bought another precious minute of rest by laying and waiting for them to come nearer. He knew the freight-elevator went up only as far as the floor beneath him; the Kunklies would have to use the stairs for the final level.

Jeske wounded the first two Kunklies to appear on the roof. In awed fascination he watched each wounded man turn his own weapon to his chest and squeeze the release. They were killing themselves to save their fellows anguish, and—more important to them right now—to leave them free to hunt him.

The third Kunklie to appear shot at the exact instant Jeske moved; with dismay he felt his right hand go numb.

Jeske turned and went down the fire-escape, five steps at a time. He

looked at his right hand as he went. It was uninjured, but his gun was gone! He was unarmed. That piled the odds against him still higher.

Going down the fire escape took relatively little energy. But it was seventeen flights to the street, and he hadn't bought enough time to give him the rest he needed. And there was nothing for him to do now except run!

Five minutes later Jeske knew he had reached the end of his endurance. He was a mile and a half from the hotel but still he was surrounded by his pursuers. Ahead loomed a rubble-strewn hole in the ground where a building had lately been torn down.

Jeske poised for a moment at the edge of the hole, and jumped. The drop was only three yards, but his legs buckled as he landed. He fell forward on his face, and for a brief instant he lay still with the taste of brick-dust and his own blood in his mouth, and a stabbing misery that came up from his twisted left leg.

Jeske sickened and felt the vital juice go out of his spirit. He knew he'd never be able to rise, but he forced himself to crawl into a corner of the excavation. He huddled behind a pile of rubble and waited for them to come and kill him.

But as any hunter knows, an animal is most dangerous when it is wounded and cornered. Now that all hope had fled, Jeske's mind cleared and he reasoned with a lucidity that amazed him. And with the lucidity came the solution to his dilemma! They thought they had him cornered, when in fact, they had lost.

Only one thing could defeat him now. He had to make certain that the first Kunklies to arrive came at him only one at a time. He crawled deeper into the corner of the excavation, pulled himself to a sitting position against one wall, and waited.

THE KUNKLIE peered cautiously around a corner of broken wall,

met Jeske's waiting gaze, and froze!

A wave of searing violence bent the Kunklie's body, and he sagged slowly to his knees. He fought for one long terrible moment, and then his face seemed to go to pieces and a cry of agony burst from his lips. The cry changed to a tormented howl, and then to great sobs of anguish.

Jeske held tight his mind-lock on the crying man. He knew that every Kunklie on Earth, Smith included, was experiencing the same torture. Gradually he let up the punishment, until the Kunklie was able to control his quivering muscles.

"Drop your weapons," Jeske said. He spoke to the man at his feet, but every Kunklie knew that he was addressing them all. "Now move directly away from me." Jeske sent a last warning stab into the mind of the man on the ground. "You stay here with me," he amended.

For the next half hour Jeske sat still, feeling the aura of the Kunklies draw away into the distance. He kept his mind-lock on the man before him, touching him with pain at regular intervals. "That's far enough," he said, when he was certain that he was safe.

"Smith," Jeske said. "I want you. Come to me."

Time dragged for almost an hour before Smith came into sight. He walked like an automaton, with only the fierce agony in his eyes showing how hard he was fighting. But he was helpless.

Jeske shifted his control to Smith. "You. Out." He indicated the prostrate Kunklie with a nod of his head. He was taking no chances now.

Smith's tongue and lips worked as he tried to form words. "It's no use," Jeske said, shaking his head. "I don't want to hear anything you have to say; just listen.

"I know your upper-level hierarchy on Kunkle is hearing everything I tell you," Jeske said, "and I say to them,

listen carefully while I speak. They will never get another warning.

"By nightfall I want every Kunklie off this Earth, all except Smith. He and I will remain here—for the rest of his life. After I finish talking I am going to place Smith under hypnosis. He will forget all about everything that he has known before this moment. He will be given the memory and identity of an Earthman. And I will stay here to see that he is not rescued.

"If I receive word that you make any further attempts at conquest," Jeske continued, laying the heavy weight of his voice on Smith—and on the distant Kunklies, "or if you come to Earth, with the intention either to free Smith or kill him, I will subject you to the same torture you have experienced for the past couple hours. Bear in mind that I have all the cards in my hands now. Your trying to find Smith here would be as futile as seeking a particular pebble among two billion. While I have only to discover that you are here.

"Furthermore, my friends back on Kunkle will be observing you at all times. Needles to say I will revenge any harm to them. I think you are wise enough to realize how futile any attempt to thwart me would be. You know my power. Be warned! That is all."

Jeske snapped off Smith's consciousness and watched him fall slackly to the ground. It was done! Jeske felt a peace he had never before known in his life.

TWO WEEKS later the business agent of the luscious Lelanne received an offer for her to appear on the legitimate stage. It was the break of her career, and she was an instant success. Her act there was pretty much the same as it had been before, but now it was billed as a satire on bur-

[Turn To Page 96]

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Down To Earth

(continued from page 8)

wise and pacewise, and the story—and the people in the story—are enlarged and made more believable thereby. It is craftsmanship which, to my mind, adds up to "intelligent entertainment".

On the other hand, we have the Mickey Spillane school of blood and guts and fast action, sex, sweat, brutality sheerly for the sake of shock value, interspersed with sentimentality. There is nothing in such stories to make one think, even to the point of examining some second-hand opinions. The detectives are homicidal maniacs, filled with nauseating self-righteousness, as brainless as the bullets they fling whenever human flesh offers provocation and a target—and it seems as if, often as not, that the existence of the target is sufficient provocation.

What I mean, then, is that the Christie type of entertainment shows that "recognizable degree" of auctorial responsibility: the author is aware of certain "human values" which our civilization considers worth trying to preserve, regardless of how poor a job may be done in preserving them at any given moment. Miss Christie may or may not agree with Dr. Gerard and Hercule Poirot; that is unimportant—in fact, no author should be held re-

sponsible for *every* opinion any one of his characters may hold. However, there is a difference between exposing and examining—through the medium of fiction—ideas and opinions which a reader may consider deplorable, and presenting *all* of one's characters as sordid masses of stinking flesh, better off buried, and regarding human life (by inference) as basically worthless.

The Spillane type of entertainment, I submit, can be described as totally irresponsible.

What has the above to do with science fiction?

A very great deal. I chose the detective thriller for my exhibits simply because (as I stated in what passed for an address to the Philadelphia Science Fiction Society a couple of months back) I believe that the standards of excellence in science fiction are basically the same as in any other kind of fiction.

When I insist that science fiction is—or should be—written to entertain intelligently, and include "a reasonable degree of auctorial responsibility" in the qualifier, I mean that it should *not* be written for any other purpose. It should not be written to conform with any political "line", etc. I mean

this as an *over-all attitude* toward science-fiction writing; obviously a story or stories—and very good ones—can be written employing various political, etc., credos as a starting-point. (In fact, many have. For example, the basic theme of "Gravy Planet" might have been stated as "Unrestricted Advertisers could really make Earth ghastly.") The proposition that science-fiction should educate the reader in scientific facts, should point lead the way to a "better" world, etc., may be okay for a given story or stories—but not as the basic standard in the field.

WHAT IS the essential ingredient, then? I think this can best be answered by asking what is missing in stories we would label as examples of irresponsible writing: *the desire to understand human beings*, with the underlying assumption that the effort is worth while. Crossen & Knight make much of the critical possibilities of science fiction, and these certainly exist to a larger degree than in some other forms of fiction, but the "angry man" approach is not enough. Mike Hammer is an "angry man"; he's boiling mad at police inefficiency, corruption, and loose morals, and he's appointed himself local judge, jury, and executioner.

Obviously, the desire itself is not going to result automatically in good stories from the author who has the desire, but not the ability—or who has both the desire and ability to understand people, but not the necessary skill as a writer. An essential ingredient, after all, is but one of many ingredients. (I have been told, for example, that despite many excellences in his attitude as a writer, the late Theodore Dreiser wrote very poorly—that he might be considered a rather bad "good" writer. Whether or not this is true of Dreiser, it is very likely true of some.)

A great deal of more-or-less irre-

sponsible writing is innocuous enough, and were we to insist on a "responsible" attitude manifest in every story we read, quite a bit of innocent merriment might be lost. There's a place for the light writer, who entertains sheerly through interesting, or amusing, situations, but whose characters are clichés—providing they are not malicious stereotypes. It is the critic's job to warn readers against the worst, and to protest its promulgation—in addition to pointing out the best.

The critic cannot prevent the publication of irresponsible writing (except in rare, individual instances) so long as editors and/or publishers are determined to cash in on such material's sales-value. What the critic can do, and should do, is continually to snipe away at the demand for the worst; it's a long-range problem of trying to educate the public, and there's little guarantee of much tangible result. It's generally believed, however, that there are trends in public taste—that, for example, the readers of the Spillane type of thriller will finally get weary of it and turn to—(if you will forgive me a much-abused adjective)—more mature thrillers. Critics may, at times, be able to spur on a new trend.

Obviously, an attitude of responsibility for what one writes, or what one offers to the public, cannot be legislated into the individuals concerned; and, generally speaking, I think it boils down to a simple Aristotelian proposition: either a given individual has a sense of responsibility in this frame, or he hasn't.

Where an author has it, he won't consciously sit down to inject the "essential ingredient" into his story; his conscious concern will be only with how this or that person can best be revealed so that the reader will understand; the all-important element will be a by-product of the writer's normal working-process—and, where it occurs,

scientific instruction in science-fiction, etc., will also be a by-product. As I've mentioned before, Shakespeare did not sit down to construct enduring literature; he was merely trying to turn out entertaining plays, and his idea of an entertaining play included all the elements which we now call ingredients of masterworks. But when writers have started out with the conscious intention of producing a masterpiece which will live forever, the result has usually been pathetic.

So, with the reservations noted above, I heartily agree with the stand taken by Messrs Knight & Crossen (not that they are alone, of course) and hope it proves to be a contagious one among science-fictionists.

Now for our authors in this issue:

ROBERT SHECKLEY, at 25, has become one of the "name" writers in the field, and has earned the distinction, I think. You saw him first in 1952, and *Future* presented one of his first stories, "We Are Alone".

RICHARD WILSON's experience with Trans-Radio Press has a lot to do with the believable background of the "Dateline Mars" stories. You've asked for more of them, and we're happy to bring you "New Weapon" in this issue.

CHARLES V. DE VET is a newcomer to our pages, but not a "first", as those of you who've seen his stories since 1951 know.

GORDON R. DICKSON won your accolade for the best story in our July issue; the present story is of a different nature, but I think you'll find it interesting.

PHILIP LATHAM studies the skies under his real name of Dr. R. S. Richardson, and has written many first-rate articles for *Astounding Science Fiction*, and other publications.

Letters

BEWARE OF ANALOGIES

by Lester del Rey

Dear Bob:

Murray King's interesting comments on my article ("Get Thee Behind Me, Clio!") would need two books for proper answer. One of these has been written by McKinley; and unfortunately, I don't have space or time to write the other. But I'd like to make a few answering comments.

It's quite true that for the past 25 years or more, military power has been out of the hands of the populace at large—and that we haven't yet developed military dictatorship. Of course not—we are still controlled by a generation which grew up with firm traditions against it, and we have only just begun to touch on the problems of concentrated military power requirements. Traditions take time to break, and situations build up slowly. We had the individual weapons, and skill to use them, in the French-Indian Wars; but the American Revolution came only in 1776.

Yet we have begun to feel the effects. Every bit of skill which is put under government wraps puts the people farther from control. Every added power given to the rulers removes some control from the people. And today, men cannot have free choice to learn anything they choose, or seek any work they choose; the government imposes a highly necessary, but still dictatorial, "security" blanket. Also, beyond mere freedom of speech and press restrictions, many others of the first ten Amendments have been somewhat curtailed. The government now has to protect us by denying us certain privileges which we once called rights.

No, the army—and all other branches of the government—did not and will not want to take over and impose a dictatorship. In Rome, the men who pulled the teeth from the inadequate Senate, and took over power, first had no lust to gain dictatorship. They were sincere men who realized something must be done to preserve their country from its own confusion—and then did it, with the result of Empire. We need not fear the blind and stupid grab for power from any group in the Army—the level-headed men in that same Army would prevent it. We need only fear that the time may come when we can be protected only by a union of strength which will exclude us from control—and by men who are doing it for our own good, not through lust or greed. As Mr. King points out, tradition kept Roman control in civilian hands long after it could have been taken away

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FUTURE Science Fiction

(though I think careful reading will show that it was only a couple of generations or so). But then the Senate was no longer capable of coping with the situation—they couldn't grasp the military facts, because those facts required long military training for comprehension; they couldn't cope with such an extended frontier; etc. And in came the Caesars.

Exactly so. Can our Congress keep in touch with the military facts of atomic energy, when many of those facts have to be withheld from men who can't receive training to handle them?

America doesn't have an empire to defend, perhaps—only a loose federation of control which covers much of Europe in ways as tight as the control of Rome over her territories beyond Italy. And a major control in Japan, South Korea, Pacific Islands, etc. Names don't mean a thing when forces must encompass half the globe, and be ready to meet the maneuvers of an enemy more concentrated than any Rome had to face. Rome had her Carthage; we have the other half of the world.

Furthermore, let's not overlook the rest of the world and think only of America. In a few places, democracy has maintained itself. Mostly, during the past 25 years, it has not. Autocracy actually has gained some ground. The world was never completely one thing or the other (though democracy hasn't flourished too completely in even the best times.) In some sections, local factors previously made democracy possible where no major concentrated weapon could exist—Switzerland, protected by mountains, for instance. In others, the human animal never developed enough to reach out and use the control possible to him—as in much of the Mohammedan world. We have to add the fact that education to use the weapon available is as much a part of the weapon as the thing itself. Also, let's not forget that republicanism, as a name, is no protection against an absolute dictatorship. Elections and control through people nominally chosen by the people have existed in some of our South American dictatorships without serious trouble, at times.

The tradition of democracy, unfortunately, seems never to be strong enough in the long run to make a people willing to sit back, retaining control which prevents consolidation of full power, when by so doing they invite inevitable conquest and destruction from outside. This has been true in a number of cases—Rome among them. The people were happy to see a Caesar take over and protect them from their own inability, because it meant more safety; and I know of few cases in history where there was as strong a tradition. Perhaps only England has exceeded it.

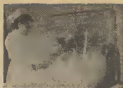
Also, extreme corruption is so inevitably

[Turn To Page 86]

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FUTURE Science Fiction

mated with long-continued hard times that to discuss them separately is useless. France made a tentative bid for democracy, but was defeated by facts other than mere corruption. She tried before her people could use the weapons by themselves to defend her—and in the gathering of outside enemies, the people had to turn power over to a Napoleon skilled in the arts which were beyond the people. It was partly the Napoleonic training of large groups in the use of the democratic-like staff which eventually permitted the people to defend themselves and secure democracy. They had been brought up to a level where they could not only seize control—frequently a simple matter, as in the Kerensky situation—but could keep it afterwards!

Nor must we confuse propped-up democracy with the reality. German republicanism was forced from the outside—it was a measure of the strength of our own democracy and power. And in the rising tide of non-popularized, concentrated control, we inevitably could not stretch our popular power enough to maintain it.

The main fact, as I mentioned in the article, is that unlike previous forms of concentrated power, the atomic weapons, rockets, and such weapons apparently brook no popular answer within any discernable time. In fact, I'm agreeing with Mr. King that you can't carry historical analogy too far. I think it has demonstrated that we're in for rough times—not because of analogy, but because the cause and effect are too directly coupled, from family life right on into the huge panorama of history. But we can't say by analogy that things have always turned from one form to another and then sit back and decide that this too shall pass. Maybe it will. But history hasn't got a satisfactory analogy; the crude ones of the past are simply not close enough.

What's the answer? I don't know. But being human, and with the foolish optimism which make all animals feel that survival into the future for the race must somehow be good, I naturally leave that up to our remote descendants, in the instinctive, illogical faith that they will somehow find the answer. Beyond that, I can see no way out.

Hmm, it seems to me to be a sound enough attitude, so long as this "illogical faith" doesn't degenerate into a passive faith in an eleventh-hour miracle, as with Byzantium—according to Muller's "Uses of the Past".

A DIFFERENT MAGAZINE

by Val Walker

Dear Sir:

I feel called upon once again to write

DOWN TO EARTH

you a letter of praise for what I call the "new" *Future*.

In the last 2 or 3 issues, *Future* has improved enough to be mistaken for a different magazine. For the first time since I started buying science-fiction magazines I will eagerly await the appearance of the next issue of *Future*; it is now on my must list of science-fiction magazines.

"Graveyard" is a story that I will never forget, and the utter simplicity of "Four Hundred Blackbirds" was unforgettable.

Now to about the only major gripe that I have with *Future*—there just isn't enough of it. *Planet Stories* has only 112 pages but over 100 of those are fiction. *Weird Tales* is the only magazine that carries as few pages as *Future*—they have only one dept. however.

A suggestion—if you must hold the number of pages down to 98, then cut out either the book-review or the article. If you have a good article, then leave out the book-review; if there is no article worthy of using, then have the book-review only. As far as that goes, I am in favor of leaving both out, but there are many fans who enjoy them.

About the trimmed edges, I wouldn't gripe if you didn't have them—but I'm happy that you do have them. I believe they make a tremendous difference in the appearance of the magazine.

If only you could find a way to get more stories in!

Rather enjoyed your editorial, Mr. Lowndes. Very sensible and very true. Just as long as you keep the science-FICTION stories coming the way they have been, you'll have my 25c.



P.S. Any fans in Oklahoma interested in joining the Oklahoma Science-Fiction Confederation, and receiving *A La Space*, the southwest's finest fanzine, contact either myself or Kent Corey P.O. 64, Enid, Okla.

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With production costs as they are, and that means steadily rising, not merely staying high, I can't offer any encouragement to those who hope for a larger magazine. All I can promise is to keep working at making the pages we have more memorable.

[Turn Page]

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REPORT FROM BELGIUM

by D. Vendelmans

Dear Sir:

After many years of reading science fiction, I have at last decided it is time to let you know that we in Europe greatly appreciate your magazine. I have been reading it ever since I discovered it in a newsagent's shop in Antwerp. (I think it was the first issue to appear in Europe; the date was January 1952.)

With very few exceptions, I enjoyed all the stories you have published. You have some very good authors and I find the illustrations are quite good, too.

When are you going to publish a serial? I think it would be welcomed by most readers.

I have been examining the possibility of starting a S. F. Club over here; unfortunately, I don't know many *Future* fans. Do you think it would be possible for you to publish my appeal in your next issue? This would greatly facilitate my establishing contact with these people and maybe even other fans on the continent.

I thank you most sincerely in advance for your kind cooperation (in the cause of science) and wish you all the best of luck for the future of *Future*.

—150, Ter Rivierenlaan, Deurne,
Antwerp, Belgium

I'm a sucker for continued stories myself, but a two-months' wait between installments is a bit more than most of our readers would like, I'm afraid. In fact, from the letters I've received, it looks as if I'm in a minority on serials, anyway. I'm afraid that the present generation of readers haven't the patience we oldtimers had, we who lapped up six and seven installment serials back in the thirties. Best of luck with your projected club.

FINAL ROUND

by Editors, Theosophical Notes

Dear Mr. Lowndes:

We very much appreciate your publication of our letter in your May number of *Future* with Mr. Martello's rebuttal. We think that your own comment is very much to the point. It is certainly a bedrock fact that what is held harmless or even praiseworthy in one environment can be held immoral, criminal, or embarrassing in another. (Say "held" rather than "is," be-

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DOWN TO EARTH

cause in our philosophy there are some crimes and misdeeds that are *real* under any conditions, no matter what people around think of them.)

We would like to further illustrate your point as follows: In certain tribes in Borneo and New Guinea, head-hunting is not merely no crime; it is a means of social advancement. Now suppose that an intelligent head-hunter were imported to New York by well-meaning civilized friends. He no doubt, while in a normal state of mind, would defer to the sensitivities of said friends to the extent of temporarily refraining from embarrassing activities of that nature—and it also would soon dawn upon him that in America the retention of his own head would depend on letting other heads stay put. But these necessary concessions would not in the least change his basic and life-long propensities. He would set such silly inhibitions down to American nuttiness—conceded to be a fact world-wide anyway—and resign himself to putting up with it while he had to, while waiting to get back to real living again. But suppose that some bright evening, he was hypnotized into thinking himself back in the jungle. There wouldn't be the slightest interference with his conscience, but the results in various hotel rooms where he was staying would be quite embarrassing to the chambermaids next morning.

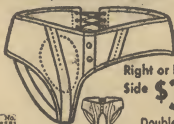
The parallel is no joke. There are hundreds of thousands of supposedly-civilized people, whose real urges have no more in common with civilization than those of the head-hunter, but who behave themselves because of artificially imposed inhibitions. Moreover, the most destructive kinds of forces can be let loose by hypnotic suggestions which violate no one's conscience, and it must be a poor imagination that cannot conceive of such.

Now, as to Mr. Martello: So far as we can see, he did not answer our letter; he just repeated himself. Insofar as credence to his contentions is to rest on any supposed impartiality and detached judgement on his part, he has disqualified himself by appealing to "authority" in such a manner as to make it clear that an authority is defined as one who agrees with him. We pointed out a collection of authorities who, in the *San Francisco Chronicle* for Nov. 13, 1952, showed—and proved by case histories—that hypnotism can be very dangerous. These men are professional hypnotists of far more experience than Mr. Martello, who is quite young. The only successful "out" for Mr. Martello in such a case would be to impeach these witnesses, showing that they are in some way incompetent. Instead, he ignores them and repeats his own "authorities," whose only basis for being "authoritative" on hypnotism being harmless is that *they themselves have not encountered damage—or recog-*

[Turn Page]

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FUTURE Science Fiction

nized it if they did. In other words, Mr. Martello's argument is based wholly on what his own side *didn't* see, and not on what others positively *did* see. (One of the things they saw was a man who went blind as the end-result of chasing a psychosomatic affliction from pillar to post by hypnotism.)

The fallacy of this kind of argument, known to every competent logician, is popularly illustrated by the Irish crack: "Bedad, you say you will bring three witnesses who saw me steal the pig—I'll bring a hundred that *didn't* see me steal it!" Mr. Martello says our remarks seem to indicate that we have had some experience with hypnotism ourselves—but he doesn't invite an explanation of what kind of experience. His suspicions that we were not talking altogether from hearsay are right. We have been among those who saw the pig stolen. But if the testimony of a whole group of experts means so little to Mr. Martello as to deserve only being ignored, what weight would anything have that *we* said? They are set down, it seems, as among those "who have worked very little with it, or not at all!" It is impossible to argue with a state of bias such as Mr. Martello's. The most devout religious fanatic could be no more opaque to opposing evidence. Hence—we say that Mr. Martello as a witness is disqualified.

Now as to your own query about mesmerism. The "mesmeric fluid" is some kind of thing that may be closely related to the well-known bio-electricity that is the basis of nerve action, but on a more powerful scale. It seems to be quite analogous to the stored charge in an electric battery, with the body cells forming the battery; for some curious reason, the right side of the body being of the opposite polarity from the left. Hence, the fluid will flow from a part of the right side of the body to a part of the left—for instance, a specially strong flow can be produced between the tips of the two fore-fingers. Under some conditions it will flow from one person to another. The latter phenomenon constitutes "mesmerism." The results depend upon many factors, but principally upon the respective vitalities of the persons concerned.

The fluid actually seems to be the seat or substance of vitality itself, and all natural "healers" are men with a superabundance of it. The transfer of this fluid does not involve unconsciousness or subjection of will on the part of the subject, hence the difference from hypnotism. It does, however, often change his state of consciousness, and we believe this is one of the reasons it became confused with hypnotism, as well as the fact that both can be used at once, quite unknowingly. However, mesmerism has some dangers of its own; prin-

[Turn To Page 92]

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cipally in the fact that any latent disease in the mesmeriser may be transferred in an active form to the patient; and this is also true of any mental or moral taint. On the other hand, the disease of the patient tends to transfer back to the operator, sometimes violently, unless he is very resistant. For this reason, most mesmerists who understand the process are very cautious about using it. Also, if a man gets to be known as a "healer" his life is no longer his own; and the process also depletes his own vitality.

Henry Steele Olcott, President-Founder of The Theosophical Society, was a very remarkable mesmerist. He placed the "gift" at the service of the Society as a demonstration of the latent powers in man, and spent some years in the Orient performing hundreds of amazing cures. Hypnotists naturally claim that all this is the result of suggestion, and that all diseases so cured are psychosomatic. It would be very hard to classify some of Olcott's cases in that way; and if one has seen (by physical, not "occult" means) the flow of the fluid, and the different appearances it takes in people of different states of health, there is no further doubt.



The evolution of the process in Mesmer's case was interesting. His first method employed the "baquet," a large metal bowl. The patients sat around this, each holding an iron rod, one end of which was placed in the bowl and the other against the affected portion of the body. Mesmer originally thought that the fluid was collected in the bowl in some way, but later found the whole apparatus unnecessary. It was about that time that some of his pupils outsmarted themselves and decided the whole operation was mental. They dropped all attempt to investigate the nature of the fluid and concentrated on the hypnotic end, which is real but a totally different process. In addition to Olcott, other Theosophists have been healers, but kept it quiet. It gets one taken for either a Mahatma or a "black magician."

Those today who happen to know something of the matter are equally cautious. We could give more details, but names connected with them would require the consent of others who might not be willing. The whole field bordering on the "occult" and the "psychic" presents great

DOWN TO EARTH

obstacles to investigation in ordinary ways, because of the manner in which intimate personal and family affairs, reputations, social and professional standings, almost invariably get tangled up in it. The "fluid" has been known in India as long as hypnotism. It seems to be an aspect of what is known as "prana."

I am sorry that it was necessary to cut this letter (several pages have been omitted between the last comment here on Mr. Martello and the notes of mesmerism) but our space is limited, and readers have started to complain about the lengths of these discussions. I'll consider a final rejoinder from Mr. Martello if he has any new comments to make, at reasonable length.

NOT SCIENCE FICTION

by Harold Schroepel

Dear RWL:

Since when does a story which is possible in the present time rate as science fiction? And a good telepath should be able to position any image as to time—at least within eras—closer stuff within years or days.

Telepathy is not limited by time, but can recognize it. Neither past nor future should be confused with present time, or with each other.

—311 North Elmwood, Peoria, Illinois

Neither the existence nor probability of telepathy has been established as yet, according to the latest reports I've seen. Even Dr. Rhine's tests are considered as dubious, at best. See Gardner's "In the Name of Science". So, this being the case, it seems to me that "Where Or When" was admissable as science-fiction, since telepathy hasn't been proven impossible, either.

EXCEPTION TAKEN

by Erik Fennel

Dear Mr. Lowndes:

The *July Future* was, as usual, a good one in most respects. Particularly liked the Katherine MacLean yarn. Nice social [Turn Page]

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satire in "Martian Ritual", and also in
that bird-brained affair.

Yup, I'm one of those odd yucks who
likes space-opera, and I definitely go along
with your side of the story-values vs. sci-
ence-education hassle, as outlined in "Down
To Earth!"

However, in that same column you spoke
of quote the dianetics fraud unquote. With
that I take issue; think you are giving a
false and misleading impression.



I believe I know whereof I speak, because
I began working intensively with dianetics
in August 1950, and am still working with
extensions and variants thereof which are
frankly based on L. Ron Hubbard's original
work.

Ron was definitely over-enthusiastic in
his early publications. He was, and is, a
man-in-a-hell-of-a-hurry type. He turned
loose a system of psychotherapy that was
woefully incomplete and far from fool-
proof, and he certainly underestimated the
difficulties. He particularly underestimated
the amount of active cooperation re-
quired of the subject.

But, even in its crude early form, dian-
etics produced astonishing results in some
cases. Not all, but an important and sig-
nificant fraction of cases.

The shouting and huzzlecoo died down,
the people who had expected miracles to be
worked upon them with no effort on their
part went away disgusted. The death of
dianetics was announced several times over.

But certain individuals continued experi-
mentation and research along the lines
Hubbard introduced so noisily. These re-
searches are still continuing, and almost all
of them seem to indicate that most of
Hubbard's basic postulates are correct. See
Time magazine, June 3, Medicine section,
for corroboration by a British psychiatrist
of the existence of prenatal memories and
the benefits to be derived from handling
them in psychotherapy.

Psychotherapy based on dianetic princi-
ples is becoming steadily faster and more
effective as these researches continue. No-
body has the complete answer as yet, and
none of the better-qualified researchers
pretend to. But progress is being made.

Check up, and you'll find several dozen
groups still using dianetic techniques in
one form or another, and getting useful,
measurable results.

[Turn To Page 96]

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FUTURE Science Fiction

A guy named Langley built a flying machine before the Wright Brothers—and tried it out—and it flew—but the first flight ended in a crash that killed Langley. But Langley's machine was no fraud.

Neither is dianetics.

Certain frauds have been perpetrated in the name of dianetics; to that I'll agree wholeheartedly, and with curses and anger yet.

But please, Mr. Lowndes, let's not throw out the baby with the bath-water!

I think it has been generally established that dianetics, as of 1950, was mostly fraudulent, and that is what I referred to in the July editorial. So far as present-day research into dianetic sidelines is concerned, that is another matter—and one on which I have no opinion.



COUNTERCHECK

(continued from
page 79)

lesque. The better class of people that patronized her show came, presumably, to watch her clever imitation of a burlesque queen, and to laugh with her. But the secret of her success was still her lovely body—and both she and the spectators knew that they came to see it.

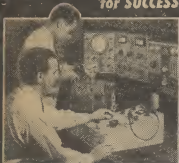
The "angel" of the show was a certain Mr. Jess Edgar. He and Lelanee were soon very close friends. In her rare moments of introspection Lelanee wondered what it was about Mr. Edgar—a man she had never seen before he backed her show—that was so familiar. She never did remember what it was.

In the background of the enterprise a quiet, unobtrusive man named John Jones earned his living by doing odd jobs about the theater. He had no slightest recollection that he had once gone under the name of Herbert Smith.



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THE RECKONING

A Report on Your Votes and Comments

The first-place votes were well-scattered, this time, but the fact that Dickson received no ratings lower than 4th place — and only three of those — put his novelet well ahead. The 2nd and 3rd placers also escaped dislike, but no story failed to capture at least one top rating.

The lackadaisical manner in which originals winners respond to the announcement that they have a picture coming their way for the asking leads me to suspect that you letter-writers aren't greatly interested in getting them. So I'm putting the issue up to vote this time; if you want it continued, fine—but if most of you don't care, then I'll drop the practice and save a little extra work.

The stories in our July issue came out like this:

1. Graveyard (Dickson)	2.09
2. Martian Ritual (Latham)	3.71
3. Four Hundred Blackbirds (Vance)	3.81
4. The Aeropause (Dye)	4.15
5. Where or When? (MacLean)	4.29
6. Strike (Wilson)	4.35
7. Road to Rome (Grinnell)	5.14

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Number these in order of your preference, to the left of numeral; if you thought any of them bad, mark an "X" beside your dislikes.

- 1. ULTIMATUM (Sheckley)
- 2. NEW WEAPON (Wilson)
- 3. COUNTER-IRRITANT (Dickson)
- 4. COMEBACK (Latham)
- 5. COUNTERCHECK (De Vet)

Shall we continue to award originals to the letter-writers? No..... Yes.....

Whose were the three best letters this time? 1

2 3.

General Comment

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"I have no special talent — but thanks to you I play my guitar better than many who have taken lessons from teachers, however, and naturally at faster cost." — Myrella-Murphy, Saint Andre, Montreal, Canada.



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